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# The New Vocationalism: A Comparative Analysis of Workforce Program Compliance at Houston Community College System

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# The New Vocationalism: A Comparative Analysis of Workforce Program Compliance at Houston Community College System

by

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# Dedication

I dedicate this work to all of my unnamed heroes, those kindred from past generations who have gone before me as pathfinders. It is upon their sturdy shoulders I stand. Had it not been for their many sacrifices, my scholarship would not have been possible.

To my twelve-year-old son, Matthew, I offer (*in loving-kindness*) this discourse as testament of triumph and my ability to overcome adversity. Use these lessons of perseverance and persistence for your own life and remember the immortal words of your late grandmother [Mervie Howard] who said, "*It is not as important where you start from in life; but the important thing - is where you finish*!"

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Using two of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) performance compliance criteria (e.g., number of graduates and placement percentages) as the standard, 32.86% of HCCS workforce programs were rated as not compliant. The researcher attempted to identify the cause of this program non-compliance as well as recommend strategies to improve the overall effectiveness of workforce programming at HCCS.

The researcher looked for similarities/dissimilarities between workforce chairpersons who supervised compliant programs and those who supervised non-compliant programs. The study was guided by three research questions and used a mixed method approach. For the qualitative piece, two focus groups were

conducted. Group One were 10 compliant workforce chairpersons and Group Two were 10 non-compliant workforce chairpersons. For the quantitative piece, identical survey questionnaires were electronically distributed to Group One [which consisted of 30 compliant chairpersons] and Group Two [which consisted of 13 non-compliant chairpersons].

The results from Group One and Group Two were very similar. In some instances, Group Two performance percentages were higher than their compliant counterparts in Group One. These findings led the researcher to conclude that workforce non-compliance at HCCS may not [necessarily] be the liability of the program chair but could be attributed to restrictive institutionalized policies and practice.

As a result of the findings, four recommendations were made: (1) the HCCS workforce operation should consider using a centralized administrative model - having all workforce deans report [directly] to the associate vice chancellor (AVC) of workforce development rather than to 5 different college presidents. (2) HCCS should modify its workforce chair selection policy. This institutionalized policy limits workforce chairpersons to 3-year terms before they are eligible for reelection. (3) HCCS' continuing education and corporate training offices should be merged with the office of workforce development to function as a single entity. Lastly (4), a process of program review involving community and

institutional stakeholders should be implemented to evaluate the feasibility of relocating Central College's industrial and trade programs from their urban setting closer to the industrialized areas [of Harris county near the petro-chemical and ship channel area] located near Southeast/Northeast College.

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

At its inception in 1901, post secondary vocational education was unpopular and had ample critics. Initially, many scholars, parents, and students believed vocational programs were for the academically inept and that these programs limited social mobility (Gordon, 2003). In 1931, one of its earliest leaders and most stanch supporters, Walter Crosby Ells, admitted, "…there was a stigma attached to vocational programs… based in part on the widespread belief that those students capable of taking preparatory courses did so while the rest were ignominiously shunted into the 'dumb-bell' courses" (Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 45).

After WWII and through the 1970s, the stigma associated with vocational education lessened because vocational programs were responsible for successfully training thousands for the job market. Even so, a few critics still contended that most of those jobs were low-wage and did not promote economic or social mobility (Zwerling, 1974; Rhoads, 1970). Tyler (1977) supported this assumption that vocational programming of the 1940s – 70s was problematic because most of its coursework lacked academic rigor. As a result, many courses were not transferable to other institutions. However, with the onset of the 1980s, vocational education experienced a radical change.

## THE NEW VOCATIONALISM

Pollard, Purvis, and Walford (1988) noted that post-secondary vocational education moved from relative isolation in the early 1900s to almost absolute integration in the 1980s, increasing in status, popularity, and effectiveness. From the adoption of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, through the industrial revolution and to the creation of the community college, the quality and content of vocational education has continually improved (Grubb, 2001). In fact, Bragg (2001) noted the expansion of the community college model was largely due to the modernization in vocational programming. Several scholars (Jacobs, 2001; Pollard et al., 1988) labeled the modernization and upgrade of vocational programming that occurred in the 1990s as "the new vocationalism."

### *A Historical Perspective of the New Vocationalism*

> Many terms have been used to describe postsecondary vocational education …such as the attachment of the terminal and semiprofessional labels to vocational education in the 1940s and the introduction of career and occupation education in the 1970s. And technical and technological education came into prominence during the 1990s... [Soon after] workforce development, human resource development, and economic development were terms associated with a different aspect of vocational education. (Bragg, 2001, p. 6)

Due to these technological advances, upgrades in curricula, and rising sub-baccalaureate salaries, those past stigmas and criticisms no longer seem applicable to modern vocational education programs. Vocational programming has evolved in unprecedented ways and grown to become the largest instructional component in many community colleges (Dougherty, 1994). Today, because of its growth, vocational chairpersons are presented with two daunting tasks: (1) how to ensure that an ever-increasing number of vocational students successfully complete their programs and (2) gain meaningful employment.

In order for vocational programs to have completers, students must believe the teaching received and learning acquired will ultimately yield an employment opportunity (Shannon, 2004). To ensure meaningful employment opportunities exist for these students, workforce education programs must remain adaptable to the ever-changing expectations of local business and industry (Risher & Fay, 1995).

This study will explore the similar/dissimilar characteristics and factors of effective and ineffective workforce programs. The introduction attempts to set the tone of the study by clarifying the significance of the new vocationalism. It also provides a definition of workforce education, establishes the criteria for determining program compliance, and then offers an overview of the Houston Community College System (HCCS) and its workforce education operation.

## WHAT ARE WORKFORCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

As mentioned earlier, many terms have been used to describe postsecondary vocational education. In Texas, three of the more common labels have been career, occupational, and technical education (Bragg, 2001). In fact, HCCS once referred to vocational education as technical education, but with the advent of the new vocationalism, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) suggested institutions use the title workforce education. What is workforce education? To answer this, the new vocationalism caused traditional vocational education to splinter into several federally, business, and educationally sponsored initiatives such as: contract training, tech prep, work-based learning, continuing education, economic development, and (chiefly) workforce education.

Unseen in the annals of vocational history, workforce education programs ushered in a new era of public acceptance, rigor, and effectiveness (Stevenson, 2003). As junior colleges transformed and became community colleges, vocational programs diverted from their traditional agricultural and industrial-based curriculum and expanded into a plethora of high-tech programs such as: nursing, nuclear medicine, banking, finance, homeland security, and NANO technology (Vanwagoner & Bradman, 2003).

Under greater pressures from regulatory agencies, workforce programs have largely been effective at providing completers with marketable skills that

lead to immediate employment, licensure, or certification (Grubb, 2001). In the new millennium, completers have also enjoyed greater social mobility through higher wages and increased academic transferability. To ensure a continuation of these positive outcomes, the THECB evaluates the adequacy of workforce curricula and monitors program compliance (THECB, 2004).

## MEASURING WORKFORCE PROGRAM COMPLIANCE AT HCCS

According to Houston Community College System's Educational Plan (2001), the THECB conducts either a desk review or an institutional site visit of all vocational [workforce] programs every four years to allow for continuous evaluation and program improvement. The THECB requires public community colleges to have instructional accountability practices to maintain a well-educated citizenry and highly trained workforce (THECB, 2004).

This study used two dominant THECB performance indicators (i.e., the number of graduates and the job placement percentage) as the minimum criteria to determine the effectiveness of workforce programs at HCCS. A workforce program must (1) produce at least 15 completers in a three-year period and (2) annually place 90% of its completers in the job market, further education, or military service to achieve the rating of compliant.

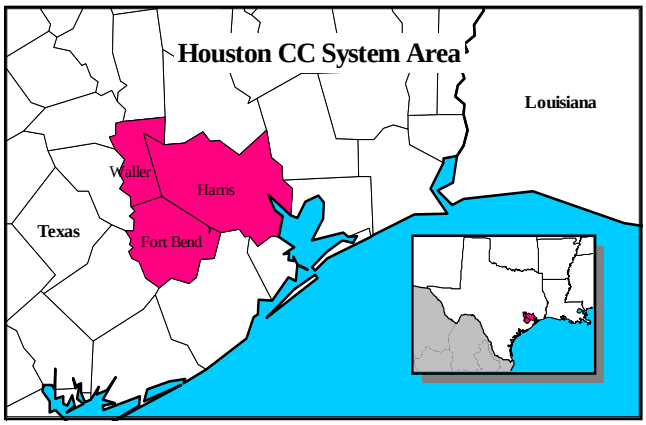
## AN OVERVIEW OF HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Since its inception as part of Houston Independent School District in 1971, Houston Community College System (HCCS) has educated and trained more than 1.3 million students. According to HCCS' 2003-2004 Fact Book, the institution is the fourth largest community college in the United States, serving over 55,000 students each semester.

HCCS is located in Houston, Texas and is comprised of a system administrative office and five-area colleges (Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest) that function under a single accreditation. These campuses are responsible for serving parts of three counties (Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller).

Figure 1

**HCCS Service Area Map**




HCCS website, 2004

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AT HCCS

The office of workforce development is a system administrative responsibility and is headed by an associate vice chancellor level position. The office provides leadership and technical assistance to five college workforce deans. Each college dean supervises several workforce programs and his/her respective program chairpersons. The system's workforce office assists with the following:

- Development of new workforce educational programs
- Development of curriculum and program revision
- Professional development
- Liaison with national and state institutional effectiveness agencies
- Program review and grant funding

### The Mission of Workforce Education at HCCS

Cardenas and Warren (1991) stated educational missions should not be out of date, but reflective of the current operating climate, mirroring student expectations and community needs. HCCS' workforce mission embraces this philosophy. It is responsive to the needs of area business and is designed to provide students with skills, knowledge, and enhanced abilities that lead to immediate employment, licensure, or certification (HCCS workforce development website, 2004).

## Statement of the Problem

In the past, two-year colleges were not stringently held accountable for services rendered, instruction provided, and the quality of courses taught (Roueche, Baker, & Brownell, 1972). Due to pervasive factors such as state budget shortfalls, disgruntled legislators, and increased property taxes, accreditation agencies such as THECB now require HCCS and other Texas community colleges to produce (quantifiable) evidence that proves their missions are being met and their instructional programs are effective (Roueche, Boswell, & Roueche 1997; Cohen, 1992).

With this increased impetus to improve program effectiveness, workforce chairpersons must devise strategies to keep their programs vibrant, responsive to labor market variations, and relevant to the needs of students (Risher & Fay, 1995). Unfortunately, several workforce programs at HCCS are non-compliant because they failed to meet the THECB performance criteria (i.e., number of graduates and job placement percentage).

Finally, the researcher discovered that there has been only a limited amount of empirical research that addressed the effectiveness of vocational education, and many of those studies were dated and were not designed to assist the workforce chairperson improve efficiency at the program level.

## Purpose of the Study

Because some of HCCS workforce programs did not comply with the THECB performance criteria, the question could be asked: was this brought about by the system's workforce development office, the workforce deans, the program chairs, non-responsive faculty, a lack of student interest, or could the non-compliance be attributed to a lack of community/business support? Stevenson (2003) that stated poor program performance could be attributed to any number of institutional factors. However, Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) were more specific and made a strong case that leadership played a vital role in educational program effectiveness. Zeiss (1997) contended there was a positive correlation between program compliance and the extent to which the program had been marketed. Finally, Nijhof, Heikkinen, and Nieuwenhuis (2003) concluded that the effectiveness of workforce education programs hinged on positive economic conditions and the perception of the availability of work.

Given the multiplicity and variety of the aforementioned factors, the primary purpose of this study is to identify which traits, characteristics, and factors influenced workforce program compliance at HCCS. Secondarily, by determining precise causes of program inefficiency, the researcher could better develop practical and systematic strategies that would help increase the performance of those programs.

## Research Questions

The researcher was guided by three strategic questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?

2. Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?

3. Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential/detrimental to their program rating?

## Significance of Study

There are no winners (i.e., the economy, the institution, the workforce program chair, or the student) if programs are not effective. Gennett, Johnson, and Wilson (2001) observed that it was essential for workforce programs to find creative ways to become more effective or face the possibility of being "sunset" or discontinued. However, the threat of being discontinued should not be the sole motivation for workforce chairpersons to improve their programs. It is equally important to realize effective post-secondary workforce programs play a vital role in training and retraining America's workforce (Wismer, Zeiss, & Barber, 1998). Well-trained, motivated workers produce high-quality goods and services that contribute a great deal to local, state, and national economies. Houston businesses are experiencing labor shortages due to limited skilled workers.

In addition to helping train workers more effectively, this study takes on added significance because inadequate workforce programs could limit the future educational and financial opportunities of students (Gillum & Davies, 2003). Townsend (2003a) discovered graduates of two-year workforce programs are more likely than ever to pursue a bachelor's degree from a college or university based upon their satisfaction in these programs. Consequently, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2004) found workforce graduates could earn three-times as much over the course of their careers as non-graduates.

## Limitations of the Study

First, care should be given about generalizing since the study only examined the workforce education operation of a single institution. Second, the researcher used the THECB 2003 Annual Data Profile because when this study was initiated in 2004 – 2005 data, current were not available. What this could suggest is workforce programs now classified as non-compliant for placement or graduates could be ranked as compliant by the next THECB reporting cycle.

Third, since some workforce program chairs who supervised multiple programs [some of which were compliant and non-compliant] only completed one questionnaire and participated in a single focus group, the results from the data could be slightly skewed. Fourth, Group One and Group Two focus group discussions were limited to a period of one-hour each.

Fifth, the researcher did not solicit any workforce students to gauge their level of satisfaction with workforce programming at HCCS. Nor, did the researcher attempted to measure the perceptions of the chairpersons' immediate supervisors (e.g., presidents and deans) regarding the chairs' leadership abilities and record of accomplishments. Lastly, in terms of validity, program outcomes reported by workforce chairs were not verified against institutional data.

## Definition of Terms

***A Credential*** - higher educational institutions offer credentialing, of some type, for their students. Community colleges typically offer the following credentials or awards for workforce students: Associate in Applied Science degree, a variety of occupational specializations, and occupational certificates.

***Accountability*** - the act of being responsible to certain federal, state, or public forces.

***Workforce Advisory Committee*** - a group of representatives from the "real world" of business and industry who advise faculty and administrators on the design, development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of workforce education programs (HCCS, Handbook for Advisory Committee/Council Members - 2002).

***Assessment*** – the act of determining the level to which a community college or its programs have met preset/pre-established performance objectives and standards.

***Institutional Effectiveness (IE***) - is defined as an internal strategy for planning that generates hard data by which the community college can match its performance to its purpose (Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, & Associates, 1997).

***Occupational Crossover*** - the ability of individuals to elevate to a higher-level occupational responsibility (Liston, 1988).

***Program Chairperson*** - the head or leader of an educational program. The position of program chairperson is equivalent to a 'department chairperson,' and is responsible for a multitude of duties such as supervising faculty/staff, managing the program budget, and student recruitment.

***Student retention*** - entreating students to remain in their courses until their programs have been completed; while, recruitment is the ability to attract and enroll students in various programs.

***Sub-baccalaureate*** - a term that refers to a community college degree, credential, or award that is less than the bachelor degree.

***Sunset Review*** - this term refers to the closing or discontinuation of a community college technical education program because of accreditation or administrative problems (GIPWE, 2001).

***Workforce Cluster*** - clusters are the groupings of two or more similar workforce programs. An example of a design cluster could be the grouping of an interior design, with a fashion design, and a floral design program.

## Dissertation Overview

**Chapter One** served as an introduction to the study, provided the historical context for vocational education, and offered a foundational explanation for the development of workforce education. Chapter One also provided a brief overview of the research-site [HCCS] and its multi-campus workforce development operation. It concluded with the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study.

**Chapter Two**, through an extensive literature review, identified and addressed three prominent areas: factors that positively influence workforce program compliance, potential challenges to the future of workforce effectiveness, and critique a successful workforce operation.

**Chapter Three** discussed the design and organization of the study; by detailing the methodological procedures for selecting subjects, the design of the survey questionnaire, the framework for the focus groups, and the treatment of the data.

**Chapter Four** presented the findings of the study. Given the researcher examined two groups of workforce chairpersons [compliant and non-compliant] and employed two methods [quantitative and qualitative]; this approach yielded four data sets. These results were presented by way of narratives, tables, and graphs.

**Chapter Five** included a summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for improvement.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Introduction

To understand the comparative factors and challenges of workforce programs at HCCS, Chapter Two is divided into three distinct sections with three different purposes. The purpose of the first section is to identify relevant literature associated with factors essential to improving workforce program compliance (e.g., positive dean/chair relationship, visionary leadership, faculty development, enrollment management, effective advisory committees, sound program budgeting, constant program evaluation, etc). Not only will factors be identified, but the researcher will also present practical strategies to assist the workforce practitioner in achieving successful program outcomes.

Conversely, the purpose of the second section is to identify literature associated with potential challenges to workforce program compliance (e.g., the emergence of career-based proprietary institutions and the outsourcing of American jobs overseas). In this, the researcher suggests that if unchecked these two pervasive challenges have the potential to undermine any future gains of workforce education. In the third section, the purpose is to benchmark a successful workforce operation. Greenville Technical College rendered an excellent example of leadership, collaboration, and workforce programming.

## THE WORKFORCE DEAN AND THE WORKFORCE PROGRAM CHAIR: NOT EQUAL BUT INTERDEPENDENT

Eaton (1979) suggested a major shortcoming of the community college hierarchy is that certain positions (i.e., president, dean, or chairperson, etc.) are either viewed as over managed or isolated, rather than, inclusive or shared. Yukl (2002) implied that at some institutions, the working relationship between the dean and the program chair might be obstinate and bellicose. Warren (1993) suggested that the dean and program chair's relationship should be bilateral, flexible, and were not hierarchically equal - but interdependent. To accomplish institutional and program objectives better, the dean and chairperson must work affably to establish an essential partnership.

> A fundamental premise for the essential partnership is that the dean's role carries with it considerably less ambiguity than that of the chairperson. The dean's view of the institutional mission and the nature of academic leadership should be well formed…The need for overt communication between the dean and chairperson, especially new appointees, seems obvious…[However] the philosophical mooring of the chairperson's position and the challenge of shared, dynamic leadership, often go unexplained… (Warren, 1993, p. 30)

Philosophically, the dean and the chairperson's fate are dramatically interwoven. Bennett and Figuli (1993) implied they must learn to depend, trust, and value each other. Bennett and Figuli discovered, unfortunately, that many deans viewed the responsibilities of a chairperson as little more than a 'gloried' faculty member. Conversely, Hammons' (1984) research provided evidence this was not correct by identifying at least 40 necessary functions and activities that the program chair performed. Not all 40 functions were listed; however, below are the five major categories of activities identified by Hammons (1984) that program chairpersons perform:

**Major Functions and Activities of the Chairperson**

(1) Administration

(2) Student orientation

(3) Manage program business and financial issues

(4) Supervise faculty

(5) Oversee curriculum and instruction

Conversely, research has shown that the dean's position can be equally laborious (Walters & Keim, 2003) and often unappreciated by both the college president and the chairperson (Harris, 1964). Walters and Keim (2003) studied essential responsibilities of deans and concluded [similar to program

chairpersons] that their position was often taxing, frustrating, and mainly unsupported. For workforce programs to be effective, both the dean and the chairperson must believe they have the total support of the college president. Harris (1964) noted that some college presidents were not as involved, informed, or concerned with vocational programming as compared to general academic programs. This could breed institutional animosity, weaken vocational education, and stifle workforce dean productivity. Wenrich and Wenrich (1974) explained this partiality was largely due to disparities in status among deans of different disciplines and the existence of an educational divide between vocational and academic programs.

> The chief occupational educational administrator should be on par with officials administering other basic functions of the college. His appropriate title may be dean… but his status and responsibilities must be equivalent of the administrators in charge of general academic programs. (Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974, p. 142)

Despite the lack of deference of the workforce dean's status at some two-year colleges, Cohen and Brawer (2003) noted the workforce dean must not be viewed as cantankerous by other college administrators; but must build institutional alliances. Cohen and Brawer (2003) affirmed that without key constituencies; the workforce dean will accomplish nothing of any significance or

importance. Because of these antagonistic institutional forces, Bennett and Figuli (1993) suggested it was even more critical for the workforce dean and program chairpersons to look at each other as their most important constituency. Bennett and Figuli surmised, “Wise deans recognize the indispensability of chairpersons and cultivate them accordingly. For their part, chairpersons also must see the dean as more than a necessary evil, for no lasting political advantage is secured” (p.2).

### The Dean and the Program Chairperson: A Strategy to Work Together

Below are two separate strategies, one for the workforce dean and the other for the program chairperson, devised by Warren (1993) to increase an amicable working relationship between dean and program chairperson. Warren (1993) thought the dean’s role should be one primarily of expectation and support; while, the program chairperson’s role was one that was one based on contribution. Warren offered a set of strategies for each individual to better help them understand their respective role, improve their working relationship, and enhance workforce program effectiveness.

### Strategies for the Workforce Deans to Work with their Program Chairs

- Deans should willingly share institutional knowledge and detailed information with all chairpersons. Chairpersons need such information to

generate organizational trust and effective leadership, which results in a stronger sense of appreciation and support from the program chairperson.

- The dean should take the lead in reducing the amount of unproductive and trivial paperwork required from the workforce chairperson.
- The dean should organize biannual "planning retreats" with all of his/her program chairpersons. This provides deans and chairpersons an opportunity to travel off-campus to share their common views and honest differences. It might be helpful also to invite the campus president periodically to these retreats.

**Strategies for Program Chairs to Work with Their Deans**

- While preserving their departmental relationships with his/her faculty and staff, the workforce chairperson must balance this against his/her responsibility and respect for the workforce dean.
- The program chairperson must clearly convey to all departmental faculty and staff that there is congruency between his/her program goals and the goals of the dean. In essence, the program chair and the dean must represent a uniform front.
- To build a harmonious and effective work relationship, the program chairperson must communicate all serious program concerns to the workforce dean in a timely and accurate manner.

## HCCS' Selection Process for Workforce Program Chairpersons

Given the autonomy of the position, the reliance of the students and the community upon the program's success, and the reputation of the institution being at risk, hiring or selecting a workforce program chairperson is extremely important and should be a reliable process. Hynes (1993) mocked the only failsafe process to avoid difficulty in hiring was not to hire the wrong person in the first place. Hynes wrote, "It takes little reflection to realize that the best solution for problems is their prevention…hiring the right people pays off enormously in the reduction of problems the wrong people could later create" (p. 47).

HCCS' much innovated selection process for workforce chairpersons attempts to mimic the philosophy of not hiring the "*wrong person in the first place*" because the institution opts not to use an external hiring process. Rather, workforce chairpersons are selected *only* from internal candidates by a panel of their peers. According to HCCS' Department Chair Guidelines (2002), both academic and workforce chairpersons are selected from the ranks of existing full-time faculty members. The selection criteria for the position of HCCS workforce program chairperson states:

> Any eligible faculty may apply for a position that will be located at the college where the program is hubbed [housed]. The process of selection

> should be agreement by consensus. Failing that, however, the selection will be made by a majority vote of the department's full-time faculty members present. If there is no majority, the president, dean, and committee chair will select an interim department that will serve one year. (pp. 14 – 15)

The notion of having the faculty select one of its own as their leader is not a new concept. Williams (1996) contended the strategy of only selecting *internally* could be productive and beneficial. "No one knows the job as well as the person [already] doing it" (p. 391). Williams also implied that even in a leadership position the internal candidate's past knowledge and experiences could prove to be valuable in helping the program reestablish its competitiveness. In addition to past knowledge and experiences, the HCCS workforce chairperson should possess the following qualities (HCCS Department Chair Guidelines, 2002, p. 27):

**The Qualifications for a HCCS Workforce Chairperson**

- Ability to complete tasks while working as a member and a manager.
- Ability to be an effective advocate with governmental agencies.
- Ability to implement good personnel and budget practices.
- Good oral and written communication skills.
- Proven problem-solving and decision-making skills.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY AND THE HCCS WORKFORCE PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON

> *Transformational leaders clearly articulate…the vision…and establish the vehicle that facilitates the concrete plans to accomplish the task.* (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 117)

Many characteristics can be attributed to an effective leader, such as vision, passion, financial adroitness, and strength to name a few. However, Roueche et al. (1989) declared that there was no leadership characteristic more desirable than the ability of a leader to transform the organization. Transformation leadership theory suggests leaders are able to persuade subordinates to be more productive by transforming their attitudes, values, behaviors, and beliefs. Workforce chairpersons must move this idea from theory to application in order to keep subordinates aligned with the ever-changing goals of the college and the program (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Summers (2001) wrote about the complexity of the emerging role of vocational leadership:

> The role of leadership in successful vocational initiatives has changed and become more critical. Vocational education is occurring in an environment of new technologies, global competition, and changing demographics that are transforming community colleges. Leaders with

> foresight and courage would have a positive influence on their institutions and promote the new vocationalism. (p. 17)

The new vocationalism typifies the rapid emergence of new workforce programs integrated with existing ones. Mansfield and Mitchell (1996) warned that the workforce chairperson should be aware that some of these newly created workforce courses that are popular today might be obsolete in a very short time. For this reason, Vanwagoner and Bradman (2003) implied it was increasingly necessary for workforce program chairpersons to be visionaries. In that, Barwick (2004) and Justice (2004) cited the need for workforce leadership to anticipate environmental change and be able to design high-tech courses that will meet the ever-changing demands of business and industry.

Having a desire for a highly effective program is not enough (according to Tichy and Devanna, 1986), the key is chairpersons must develop collaborative relationships with those they supervise and develop a clear understanding of the program's goal [mission]. Therefore, these members become productive components in the achievement of those goals. In using this approach, full-time and part-time [adjunct] faculty are more apt to stay focused on the program's mission and remain vocationally adaptable (Sullivan, 2004). The vast majority of literature (Bass & Avoloio, 1993; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; Roueche et al., 1989; and Howell & Frost, 1989) shared at least six

common leadership strategies that should assist workforce program chairpersons in building faculty/staff mission-centeredness and collaborations:

**Chairperson's Strategies for Building Faculty/Staff Collaboration**

1. Identify and articulate the program's vision.
2. Provide an appropriate model of program effectiveness.
3. Foster acceptance of group ideals and goals.
4. Establish high-performance expectations for the program.
5. Provide individualized support for faculty and staff members.
6. Provide intellectual stimulation for faculty and staff.

Millard (1972) noted it was invaluable for leadership to identify and articulate a vision to faculty and support staff. Vocational leadership should provide program members with an appropriate model or archetype of program effectiveness (Millard, 1972). To foster acceptance of group ideals and goals, Howard and Scheffler (1994) recommended chairpersons strive to ensure that program goals are a cumulative undertaking by all program members. Further, the central vision and expectations of the workforce program should always fall within the framework of the institutional vision and expectations. Roueche et al. (1989) contended leadership should set higher expectations for followers.

At the program level, Roueche et al.'s (1989) notion of setting higher expectations has credence because chairpersons who lower expectations normally have lower performing programs. Finally, chairpersons must provide individualized support. Millard (1972) contended vocational leadership should not be bound by "traditional" concepts; rather, leadership should explore opportunities to intellectually stimulate faculty and staff development. Most research suggested the most effective way to keep faculty and staff intellectually stimulated is through enrichment programs.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Grant and Kiem (2002) revealed faculty enrichment programs, sometimes called faculty development programs, were an excellent way of keeping faculty intellectually challenged, motivated, technologically current, and centered on the program's mission. The study further implied that professional development programs also helped to improve the overall effectiveness of classroom instruction. Cardenas and Warren (1991) found that community colleges should provide preparation for faculty development programs so that faculty is better equipped to meet the challenges of changing student demography and learning.

Most community colleges now recognize the varied advantages of faculty development and are willing to support these types of programs. Grant and Kiem (2002) found that at least 52% of two-year institutions had a designated faculty

development coordinator and 85% of these community colleges open the programs to both full and part-time faculty. Larger institutions [such as HCCS] were more likely than smaller institutions to allow all employees to participate. Grant and Kiem (2002) also predicted, “community colleges would continue to improve the status, set higher priorities, enhance the quality, and broaden the opportunities for faculty development programs in the future” (p. 108). HCCS is one example of an institution attempting to broaden the opportunities for its faculty through the development of the Faculty Externship Program.

> An extern was defined as a full-time HCCS faculty member who was loaned for a predetermined period to a participating business, industry, educational institution, or service agency. During this externship period, the faculty member must be actively engaged in "hands-on" work experience, which was typical of participating agencies and is relevant to the faculty members’ teaching assignments. (HCCS, Workforce Extern Website, 2005).

## The Faculty Externship Program at HCCS

The HCCS Faculty Externship Program was designed specifically for workforce faculty members as a mechanism for faculty (1) to maintain currency in their technical areas, (2) to maintain relevancy in their competency-based curriculum, (3) and to expand the cooperative partnership with business and

industry (HCCS Department Chair Guidelines, 2002). Stevenson (2003) affirmed that there were copious rewards for providing workforce faculty with continuous "real-world" industrial experience in their chosen teaching disciples and listed four advantages of such programs: 1) enhances classroom projects and assignments, 2) improves instructor's content-knowledge, 3) aids curriculum planning, and 4) keeps instructor's technical skills current. In accordance with HCCS Department Chair Guidelines, participating faculty should be able to accomplish the following objectives upon completion of the program:

**Externship Program Objectives**

- Share their most recent technical skills, knowledge, and methods gained from their externship program with fellow faculty.
- Transfer their "real-world" experiences into the classroom.
- Enhance their content-knowledge and technical skills.
- Affect appropriate curricular changes.

Senior HCCS administrators expect the extern program to increase (1) faculty morale, (2) workforce student retention and placement percentages, and (3) industry's access to the workforce faculty. The externship program is based on an agreement between the college and business/industry. Externs must be engaged in meaningful work that is relevant to their teaching discipline. The faculty member must oversee or be involved with a substantial project within the

company. The project should not only benefit the company but also assist the faculty in learning new skills/knowledge or in upgrading their technical expertise so that it can be brought back to the classroom (HCCS Department Chair Guidelines, 2002).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CURRICULUM PLANNING

As the bridge between students and their future employment, workforce education programs must be the result of a carefully planned curriculum (Bentley, 1977). Curriculum planning is vastly important and is the foundation of the teaching and learning process. Curriculum planning, according to Wenrich and Wenrich (1974), greatly determines the occupational passageway, legitimacy, and effectiveness of workforce programs.

For this reason, the program chairperson should constantly ask, "Does the curriculum need to be revised, updated, or discontinued?" Curriculum planning should be an important concern for the workforce chairperson. However, the chairperson needs to understand this is not an individual task – he/she should seek input from others. Curriculum planning should also be a responsibility of program faculty [adjunct and full-time], advisory members, and other industrial leaders who have expertise within those given occupations. Amidst the spirit of the new vocationalism and increased accreditation requirements, workforce chairpersons

must be able to integrate academic rigor and social competence effectively into their curriculum planning strategies.

Healy (1974) addressed the need for interpersonal skills within the vocational work environment, citing a vast majority of American workers lacked adequate workplace oral and written communication abilities. This sentiment came slightly ahead of the 1983 U. S. Department of Education's National Commission publication, "A Nation at Risk". This document largely called attention to the United States' lagging secondary and postsecondary educational system. In 1987, Workforce 2000 highlighted the coming labor shortage and the need for more complexity in workplace skill requirements (Judy & D'Amico, 1987). Elizabeth Dole, former Secretary of Labor, established the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) to address the need for national skill standardization (Giloth, 2004).

In 1990, the U.S. Secretary of Labor charged the SCANS with the goal of encouraging improved economic performance through high-skill and high-wage employment (SCANS website, 2004). The SCANS attempted to address the need for national skill standardization by better defining those critical skills necessary to succeed in life and in the American workforce. These competencies were published in a national report in 2000.

The final report concluded that American workers, in an effort to spur economic performance, needed improved foundational skills and workplace competencies. The foundation skills, as identified by the SCANS, reported that what American workers needed most were basic computation, literacy, and the ability to apply this knowledge in a work setting.

Table 1

| SCANS Foundation Skills |
| --- |
| **Basic Skills**: A worker must read, write, perform arithmetic and mathematical operations, listen, and speak effectively. |
| **Thinking Skills**: A worker must think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn, and reason effectively. |
| **Personal Qualities**: A worker must display responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty. |

HCCS Educational Plan, 2001, p. 14

In formulating workplace competencies, SCANS targeted three primary audiences: students, instructors, and employers. This group identified five areas of concern: resources, interpersonal skills, information, system, and technology. Stevenson (2003) concluded that workplace competencies, in particular, had the potential (in a work setting) to help employees better execute on work teams, solve problems, and understand and use technology more effectively (see Table 2, p. 34).

Table 2

| SCANS Workplace Competencies |
| --- |
| **Resources**: A worker must identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources effectively. |
| **Interpersonal Skills**: A worker must work with others effectively, as a team member, a teacher, a leader, a negotiator, and able to serve clients/customers and work with diversity. |
| **Information**: A worker must be able to acquire, organize, evaluate, process and use information effectively. |
| **Systems**: A worker must understand complex interrelations and know how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operate effectively within them. |
| **Technology**: A worker must be able to work with a variety of technologies, including computers, and them to problem solving and decision-making. |

HCCS Educational Plan, 2001, p. 14 - 15

## THE INTERNET AND DISTANCE LEARNING: WORKFORCE'S NEW FRONTIER

Dahllof, Harris, Shattock, and Veld (1991) stated teaching and learning is the central role of higher education. However, in the last decade, the method in which workforce education is being taught has begun to change. The Internet has now become a viable learning option for the workforce student. Treat (2004) implied that for modern postsecondary workforce programs to be effective, they must reconsider the way learning is delivered. This does not mean that the face-to-face [classroom] method should be eradicated but Johnson, Benson, Duncan, Shinkareva, Taylor, and Treat (2004a) did suggested incorporating more work-based distance learning into vocational education.

However, Hancock (2001) suggested that since the development and introduction of the Internet, student learning opportunities are no longer constrained by time or space. According to Hancock (2001), distance learning has become an educational equalizer particularly for workforce programs. Whether the workforce program was offered at a small or large, urban or rural institution, the results have been the same.

Johnson et al. (2004a) reported that both the number of students enrolled and the number of institutions participating in workforce-based learning has increased. Moreover, they found that out 270 responding community colleges,

76.3% of them offered some type of work-based distance learning. Career-based distance learning was offered at two-year colleges of all sizes and in all regions of the country. Astonishingly, 46.6% of the courses offered were non-credit workforce courses. Table 3 represents the 2001 – 2002 annual workforce enrollment (credit and non-credit) for those institutions participating in the distance education study.

Table 3

**2001 – 2002 Annual Distance Enrollment in American Community Colleges**

| **Institutional Charteristics** | **n** | **Credit WF Enrollment** | **n** | **Noncredit WF Enrollment** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All Institutions | 190 | 985.7 | 123 | 190 |
| Region: | | | | |
| East | 81 | 873.0 | 54 | 112.1 |
| Midwest | 58 | 1039.0 | 38 | 341.7 |
| West | 51 | 1003.5 | 31 | 142.1 |
| Institutional Size: | | | | |
| Less than 1,000 | 10 | 296.7 | 6 | 37.3 |
| 1,001 – 3000 | 60 | 437.4 | 34 | 167.3 |
| 3,001 – 10,000 | 87 | 962.2 | 59 | 180.4 |
| More than 10,000 | 33 | 2098.2 | 24 | 286.8 |

Source: Johnson et al. (2004 b)

## WORKFORCE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT: PROGRAM RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Student recruitment and retention is an important consideration for all community colleges. Wild and Ebbers (2003) acknowledged that two-year institutions should identify and monitor retention goals, data, and develop establish well-organized enrollment management plans. This strategy could be an even more important consideration for workforce programs than general educational programs. First, unlike postsecondary general educational courses (i.e., math, English, or the pure sciences), workforce programs are not required subject matter and are not a part of the Texas "mandatory" core curriculum that applies to all academic degrees (THECB website, 2005). Thus, community college workforce programs are not guaranteed a steady stream of students from semester to semester.

Second, because of skilled labor shortages, businesses would often prematurely entice and lure workforce students away from completing their programs, degrees, or certificates in order to become full-time employees. To combat these two major student recruitment and retention challenges, Iadarola (1993) offered four critical strategies to assist workforce program chairpersons more effectively manage student enrollment.

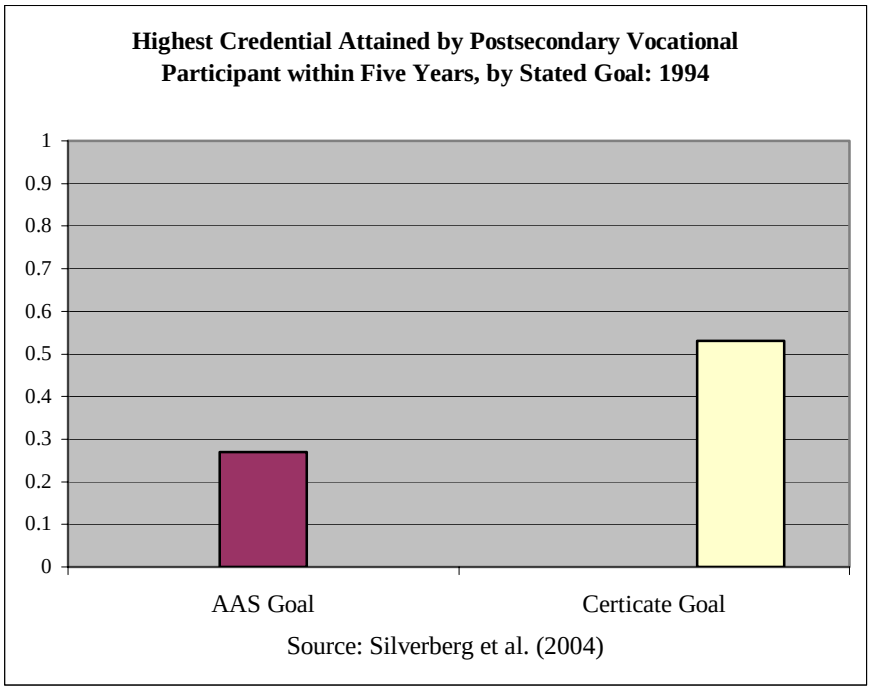
**Iadarola's Four Enrollment Management Strategies**

1. *Clarify the Program's Mission*: Iadarola (1993) noted, "Chairpersons should not wait for a sudden drop in enrollment before asking questions about purpose, programs, and overall effectiveness" (p. 215). Faculty and staff should agree that recruitment and retention is the key mission of the program. Everyone should understand that without students, there would cease to be a program.
2. *Make the Right Connections*: Appoint a faculty or staff member from the program to serve as liaison to other campus departments (i.e., financial aid, admissions, job placement, etc.). According to Iadarola (1993), this ensures high visibility for the program and can provide valuable information on student flow throughout the entire campus structure.
3. *Develop Action Plans*: Based on employment trends and student demographics, the workforce chairperson with the assistance of adjunct and full-time faculty should develop recruitment and retention action plans. The chairperson along with faculty should consider issues such as advertising, student financial aid, and post-program employment.
4. *Develop Partnerships*: Thomas (1980) agreed with Iadarola (1993) that one of the most difficult undertakings for a chairperson was to establish a meaningful private sector partnership.

## GRADUATES AND COMPLETERS

Koker and Handel's (2003) study that suggested, "over 60% of students who enter two and four year colleges and universities leave their institutions before completing a degree" (p. 131). Silverberg, Warner, Fong, and Goodwin (2004) noted a more recent study that suggested slightly more than half (53%) of workforce students who "stated" attaining a postsecondary certificate as a goal never took enough coursework to actually earn a credential. Table 4 suggests even lower attainment percentages (27%) for those workforce students with the "stated" goal of earning an associate of applied science degree.

Table 4



Source: Silverberg et al. (2004)

Silverberg et al. (2004) stated the low completion rates for those who attempted to earn an occupational or workforce-related credential should be troubling because of the obvious benefits that sub-baccalaureate attainment has on the labor market, the American economy, and the students themselves,

> Given the labor market value of college credentials, lifelong learning, and flexibility in skills, the sub-baccalaureate vocational education is increasing important. [Despite] the institution provides services from which most students benefit. Relatively low rates of retention are a concern…not only because federal policy has long encouraged postsecondary degree completion as a strategy for maintaining American economic competitiveness, but also because participants would reap greater earnings from staying long enough to earn a credential. (p. 12)

Ironically, Silverberg et al. (2004) found that even non-completers of workforce programs may still realize some benefit. A few workforce students do benefit from a year's worth of coursework even without earning a credential. Silverberg et al. (2004) discovered non-completers' earnings were between five and eight percent more than their high school counterparts with similar characteristics. Though this maybe somewhat encouraging, there are even greater economic returns for the acquisition of postsecondary vocational education, with the greatest benefit for those who actually earn a credential.

> Much higher economic rewards go to those who pursue significant amounts of post secondary vocational education and earn a degree or certificate; female associate degree holders, for example, earn 47 percent more than similar students with a high school degree and males earn 30 percent more. These results represent the average effects of earning post secondary degrees. (Silverberg et al. 2004, p. 13)

Bailey, Kiennz, and Marcotte's [unpublished] study of the earning differential between high school graduates and postsecondary vocational students yielded promising results. Earning outputs (regardless of gender), as shown in Table 5, increased as the amount of vocational training increased.

Table 5

**Earning Differences between Postsecondary Vocational Program Participants and High School Graduates, By Gender: 2000**

| | ***Percentage Differences in Earnings*** | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Returns to:*** | Male | Female |
| One year of post vocational courses | 8.0 | 5.4 |
| ***Credential*** | | |
| Institutional Certificate | 6.5 | 16.3 |
| Vocational Associate Degree | 30.2 | 47.0 |

Source: Bailey, Kiennz, and Marcotte (2004), Analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Study.

## The Economic and Earnings Benefit of Being a Completer

Gillum and Davies (2003) conducted a study on the earning power of community college students. They identified two cohorts: (1) workers who completed workforce training and (2) those that did not. A comparative analysis of the earnings of the community college students was conducted prior, during, and after the completion of training. When comparing the community college cohort to the non-community college cohort the data revealed:

> Two years or eight work-quarters after students in 1996 cohort completed their associate's degree or program certificates and entered the state labor market; their two-year average composite earnings were $39,240. The control group measured over the same period recorded two-year earnings of 30,522 with an annual income of $15,261 (Gillum & Davies, 2003, p.244).

Gillum and Davies (2003) recorded that the student's [completer] earning power increased dramatically, some students' earnings rose $8,718 in the eight work quarters after completion. Ford (2002) viewed these types of earning increases as a national and global economic cure and contended by multiplying the above dollar amount by the potential thousands who need workforce training worldwide, national poverty could be eradicate and global economies revitalized.

## THE ROLE OF JOB PLACEMENT IN WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

In the recent past, Adler (1997) stated most two-year institutions viewed the classroom as their only responsibility. They felt little obligation for students once they completed or for the department's role in job placement. To ignore the role that workforce programs can and should play in assisting completers, "is to ignore the reality of the changing workplace and the stronger accountability measures" (Adler, 1997, p. 41). In order to meet compliancy guidelines, accrediting agencies such as the THECB have established job placement measures that require workforce programs to vigorously assist and place students in meaningful employment after they have completed the program. Currently, the THECB requires that at least 90% of workforce completers be employed, be in school [further education], or be in the military to achieve a job placement rating of compliant.

To meet these compliancy guidelines from the THECB as well as the high-expectations from enthusiastic students who are eager for employment, Adler (1997) also deduced that workforce practitioners are forced to tread in uncharted waters. In that, they must become experts in job development and job placement almost over night. Many workforce chairpersons face the dilemma of having little or no experience in devising formalized job development and job placement strategies for their students.

**Job Development and Job Placement Strategies**

- *Establish Job-Mentoring Opportunities for Workforce Students* (i.e., internships, apprenticeships, and work study). Adler (1997) suggested employers who have once provided students with [unpaid] job-mentoring opportunities while they are still taking coursework might hire these same students after they complete their program.
- *Students should have a Broad Learning Environment.* Program chairpersons should ensure that the training provided offers students broader and in-depth skills to meet the challenges of new technology, complement flexible organizational structures, and a competitive labor market (Carnevale, 1989).
- *Utilize a Variety of Recourses and Involve Different Agencies.* To help students gain employment, workforce programs can use the campus library to establish a database of the hiring patterns for local businesses. The campus library can also be an excellent teaching tool to conduct classes on proper job search activities because of the large volume of periodicals. In addition, workforce programs should seek the "free" employment-services offered from state and local employment agencies. The Texas Workforce Commission, WorkSource 2000, area [for-profit]

staffing services, and even on-campus job placement centers can assist with workforce student job profiling and placement.

Roger and Hubbard (1995) conducted critical research on the influence of job development/job placement on student outcomes and discovered that there were numerous benefits of having an effective job placement program. They discovered that effective job placement activities financially assisted the student, increased recruitment outcomes, and enhanced the subject matter being taught in the classroom. Roger and Hubbard (1995) also concluded that workforce students who participated in job placement activities (particular while they are still enrolled in the program) were more apt to complete the program.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES INVOLVEMENT: EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES, EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Bentley (1977) stated advisory committees are organized to advise, guide, and make useful recommendations to vocational administrators to perfect occupational programs. In accordance with HCCS' Handbook for Advisory Committee/Council Members (2002), HCCS established separate industry-based advisory committees for each workforce education program. The two major purposes of an advisory committee are (1) to help a college document the need for a workforce education program, and (2) to ensure that the program has adequate

resources and a well-designed curriculum to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to meet the needs of business and industry.

Bentley (1977) agreed that a workforce advisory committee is one of the most important ways of ensuring program success through effective business and industry participation. Listed below are six strategies to build advisory committee synergy that have been compiled from HCCS' Handbook for Advisory Committee/Council Members (2002) and Bentley's (1977) recommendations on how to improve advisory committee involvement, function, and effectiveness.

**Building Advisory Committee Synergy**

1. Meet regularly with advisor members and involve the committee in evaluating the goals and objectives of the program.
2. Involve advisory members in program revision decisions.
3. Members should appraise the adequacy of existing college facilities and equipment.
4. Advise college personnel on the selection and acquisition of new instructional equipment.
5. Identify other local business/industry leaders who could provide students with external learning experiences, employment, advertising, and placement opportunities.
6. Solicit committee input for new faculty development ideas.

## How to Market Workforce Programs Successfully

Boatright and Crowley (1987) conducted a study of the marketing practices at HCCS during the 1980s as it sought to develop and implement its then very successful occupational training seminars. They concluded that there were two valuable lessons that could be learned from HCCS attempt to use marketing research as the basis to analyze the needs of the Houston business community. First, Brannick (1987) realized education should be viewed as a product. Brannick further understood, "in applying the marketing concept to schools and colleges, one must be willing to view the training or curriculum as a product in the traditional sense" (p. 42). Second, Boatright and Crowley (1987) concluded that HCCS was shrewd to identify their niche market first. HCCS contacted the major companies in its service area that would be the potential users of its educational product [the occupational training seminars]. Finch and McGough (1991) agreed that location could be the difference between program success and failure.

Boatright and Crowley's (1987) research primarily focused on macro educational marketing; however, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) and the National Council for Occupational Education (NCOE) in 1994 commissioned a study of the micro [program] level marketing practices of vocational programs. The NCRVE and the NCOE study emphasized the importance of individualized workforce programs having well-developed,

broad-based, (as in the case of the Boatright and Crowley's study) niche-driven marketing plans (Bragg & Hamm, 1996). Johnson (1987) further affirmed that marketing plans should form an exclusive connection between the workforce program and the local environment and this niche market should, "closely connect to local markets where programs are perceived as having a direct impact on the local economy" (p. 74).

How can workforce programs determine their marketing niche and reach their targeted market? Zeiss (1997) stated that reaching a program market niche requires an integration of many behaviors. All of the members from that workforce department must become both investigators and ambassadors for the program. Richardson and Doucette (1981) concluded that departmental members must be aware of the industrial needs of the companies in their service area and engage these organizations in diplomat activities. That is to say, it is imperative that the value and worth of the program be vigorously promoted to area businesses.

However, Johnson (1987) also affirmed that workforce personnel need to become intimately familiar with the industrial needs of environments they served. Once the program niche has been identified, Rivera (2002) and Zeiss (1997) detailed several cost-effective strategies that workforce program members could use to reach their targeted market with advertising heading the list.

Hodgson (1978) stated that advertising was an instrument that joined consumers to services. In applying Hodgson's rationale to the community college, the consumers would be the students and the services would be the instructional programs offered. Hodgson (1978) concluded that most organizations [workforce programs included] spend a trivial amount of their resources on advertising. Sink and Jackson (2002) wrote that despite the amount of resources allocated for advertising, the key to augmented workforce program performance was how effectively those resources were directed. For advertising to be effective, leading educational researchers (Cohen and Brawer, 2003; Gleazer, 2004) deduced that the advertising campaign should target a very specific audience and be a part of a multifaceted marketing mix. Below are preferred strategies to market workforce programs.

**Strategies to Effectively Market Workforce Programs**

- Develop data driven flyers and brochures that portray the program as effective, flexible, and as a community leader in its respective field.
- Departmental members should participate in local trade shows and have membership in the rotary club or local chamber of commerce.
- Highlight program successes and accomplishments in area newspapers and on college or local radio.

- Designate a friendly and professional staff person as the point of contact for potential students and business leaders.
- Develop a program-advertising budget or create a "budgetary line item" for low cost giveaways (e.g., pens, pencils, notepads, coffee cups, etc.).

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERING, AND COLLABORATION

Whether a community college is located in an urban or a rural setting, there is mounting pressure for that institution to provide meaningful, tangible, and recognizable instructional programming that develops the community that it serves. To understand better what is meant by "community" in educational circles, Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, and Russman (1997) placed a unique perspective on the term:

> In rural areas, the college was often the only game in town, and it provides a variety of social and cultural activities that would not be expected in urban areas. In cities, the pressures associated with…poverty and low quality of K-12 schools…[may require workforce programs to be more flexible and service-orientated]. (p. 22)

Orr (2001) observed that two-year colleges and their workforce programs were beginning to understand the necessity of forging various partnerships and collaborations with multiple community interest groups and area businesses. Orr

(2001) declared that these relationships could foster and create a variety of vocational education opportunities for workforce programs.

> Collaborating with various community sectors is becoming an integral part of how community colleges undertake workforce development, particularly for the new vocationalism. In recent years, community colleges interestingly have forged formal and informal relationships with employees, labor, public schools, universities, community agencies, and other entities to create new or improved vocational programs. (Orr, 2001, p. 39)

Dury (2001) referred to Lordfax Community College (LCC) in Virginia as an example of how these collaborations, partnerships, and relationships can manifest into new workforce programs. Dury wrote LCC sensed a void in their local industrial sector's plastics, machine trades, printing and publishing, and food service areas and targeted LCC's workforce training programs to serve those needs. Furthermore, LCC's business academy also concentrated on meeting the requests of its business community by offering programs for hourly workers in retail, wholesale, manager training, and general supervision.

In terms of the types of collaborative endeavors, Orr (2001) concluded that the community college had several fundamental resources at its disposal that could motivate external entities to want to form partnerships. Orr stated that the

community college infrastructure and its expertise at teaching could attract possible partnerships. The community college has the ability to package and deliver coursework and training rapidly, deliver career guidance and counseling services, provide skills assessment, build high-tech training facilities, and [most meaningful] expand and revamp programs and services.

## WORKFORCE PROGRAM BUDGETING

Hartley (1968) speculated that, "Program budgeting relates the output-oriented programs, or activities, of an organization to specific resources that are then stated in terms of budget dollars" (p. 76). The notion of program budgeting is influenced both by the cost of the individual program and whether its outputs can be quantifiably measured. Wenrich and Wenrich (1974) acknowledged that program budgeting is more difficult to compute for general education than vocational programs. Program budgeting is easier to calculate for workforce programs because they are output-oriented.

> There are quantifiable, behavioral measures to test whether a vocational-technical program graduate actually has acquired the skills needed for a specific occupation. There are certification and licensing examinations, which must be passed in many occupational areas prior to full professional and paraprofessional employment. Another measurement is employment within the vocation for which the graduate been trained…

> [and the] salary level at which he can enter the job market after the specific training. (p. 233)

The advantage of output-oriented workforce education programs are that they provide the departmental chairperson with a justifiable, meaningful, and valid method for requesting program budget increases during the budget advocacy process to the deans and other senior campus administrators (Wenrich & Wenrich, 1974). When the program costs are compared to increases in programs outputs this is called a positive cost/benefit ratio. Somers (1965) echoed that having a positive cost/benefit ratio could provide the workforce program chairperson greater leverage during the campus budget planning process. In addition to understanding outputs, leverage, and cost/benefit analysis, the workforce chairperson should have a working knowledge of program level budget control and operation procedures.

Green (1971) agreed that chairpersons should be adroit at program budgets particularly since these workforce program allocations are [usually] awarded only once a year. To avoid mismanagement, there should be mechanisms in place to ensure that program budgets were stringently managed, reviewed, and controlled. Green observed the following:

> Strictly from a financial standpoint, budget control is the most critical facet of the operating budget. Control, as used here, means the constant review of

budget allocations against expenditures and encumbrances to determine that operating units have not overspent or over-extended their funds as originally approved in the operating budget. (p. 85)

Throop (1985) recommended that since these allocations dispense annually, workforce program chairpersons must not be overzealous and spend their resources too quickly. If, they spend too quickly, program might not have enough revenue to last to the end of the fiscal year, which could threaten the quality of the learning environment. Conversely, if the program spends its allotment too slowly, the department might have to return any unused portion back to the general budget of the institution. To manage over/under spending, Wenrich and Wenrich (1974) stated that workforce chairpersons should understand that program budgets are, typically, separated into three distinct categories: (1) personnel cost, (2) supplies and expenses, and (3) equipment.

## Personnel Cost

Personnel costs at the community college can be substantial. Salaries, wages, fringes, and benefits can total as much as 80% of the total operating budget. In an effort to control these costs, program chairpersons can often regulate the hiring of a new faculty or staff or avoid replacing an existing vacant position altogether. The non-replacement of previously approved positions can provide a significant cost-savings for the program's budget (Bouchard, 1980). To reduce

personnel costs further, workforce programs can develop student, contracted, and paraprofessional positions. Instructional personnel costs for workforce programs can be greatly reduced with the employment of part-time [adjunct] faculty. However, the judicious use of adjunct faculty should always be balanced against their ability to teach.

## Supplies and Expenses

Most workforce supplies and expenses are handled through an automatic system of requisitions through a campus, district, or system procurement office. This is done, to a large degree, to ensure the program's budget account actually does have sufficient funds available to cover related expenditures. Workforce program chairpersons, in many cases, should be aware they have the authority to transfer program funds between subcategories (i.e., consumable and non-consumables) within the overall supplies and expenses account without higher approval (Throop, 1985). According to Wenrich and Wenrich (1974), having the ability to transfer program funds is beneficial, as program needs change.

## Equipment Costs

Unlike supplies and expenses, equipment costs are normally the largest capital outlay for the majority of workforce programs. By definition, workforce is

a vocational education initiative that is linked directly to change: variations in the labor markets, the introduction of technologies, and new emerging businesses (Bragg, 2001). How have these industrial changes impacted workforce program equipment costs? These innovations have caused workforce equipment costs to be staggering and ongoing because of the constant need for upgrades in laboratory apparatus. The cost, replacement, and vast types of laboratory equipment are difficult for some college executives to understand (Throop, 1985).

The types of workforce laboratory equipment may vary from program to program (e.g., high-tech industrial kitchen equipment for the culinary arts program to sonograms for the diagnostic medical sonography program). Despite the differences in the laboratory equipment required, it all tends to be extremely sophisticated, complex, and expensive. Given these factors, workforce program chairpersons should budget for and establish a replacement schedule of laboratory equipment. Wenrich and Wenrich (1974) wrote a simplistic illustration of why and how chairpersons should establish replacement schedules for laboratory equipment.

For example, in a business program focusing on secretarial and office equipment skills, the effective working life of electric typewriters is approximately four to five years. It is not difficult to establish an inventory

schedule based on data about the expected working life of each piece of equipment, and its acquisition and expected replacement cost. (p. 236)

Though relatively simple to develop, an inventory schedule is a practical strategy that ensures the students receive “hands-on” training on equipment that is modern and functional. Another strategy to reduce equipment replacement costs is the solicitation of donations from government surplus, private business, and industry. However, workforce chairpersons should be cautioned that any laboratory equipment received from donations should be safe, in good working condition, and appropriate for the learning environment.

## NATIONAL AND STATE ECONOMIC TRENDS

### National Employment Trends

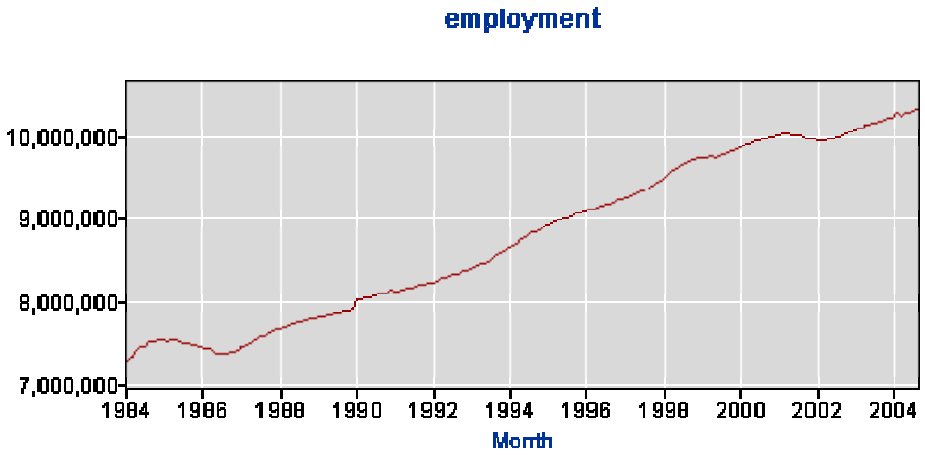
There is a correlation between the pursuit of workforce education, economic conditions, and employment trends. Rosenfeld (2000) wrote that for this reason workforce chairpersons need to be concerned about and track national, state, and [particularly] local economic trends. Workforce chairpersons should not leave this responsibility to economists, senior college administrators, or their deans. Jary and Jary (1995) stated the effectiveness of vocational [workforce] education hinges on the perception of the availability of work. If the economic condition in a certain labor sector is lethargic, students will not consider or enroll

in work-based courses in that disciple because they perceive there will be no employment opportunities upon completion of their training.

To that end, Barwick (2004) wrote that the nation's economy has been as dithering as a roller coaster. However, the slight upturn in the economic numbers suggests that the economy is beginning to settle. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) in 2004 reported that non-farm payroll employment rose by 337,000 in October 2004, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 5.5 percent. National labor conditions appear promising for workforce because there were substantial job gains in construction, the service-industry, professional and business, health care and social assistance, and financial services sectors.

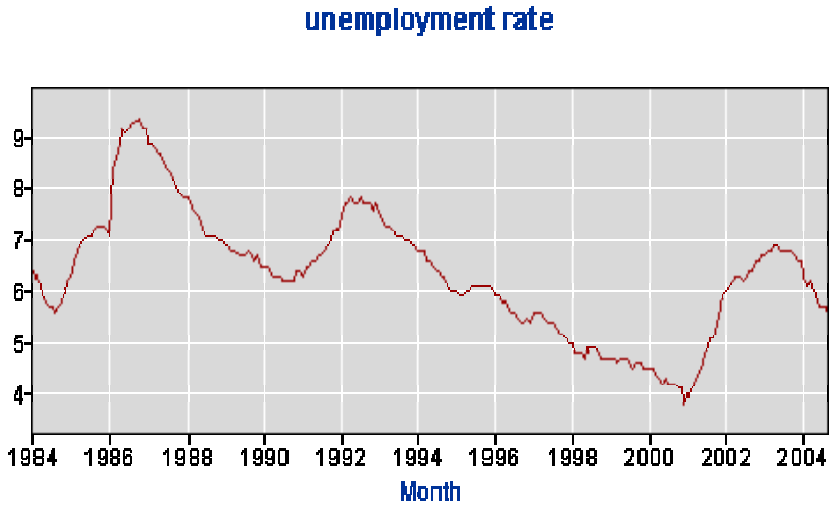
Nijhof, Heikkinen, and Nieuwenhuis (2003) agreed with Jary and Jary's (1995) notion that employment trends are especially important to the success of vocationalism. Nijhof et al. (2003) also realized that aspirants, students, and completers of vocational education programs not only want to know that they can secure employment but retain it as well. On page 59, Figure 2 illustrates a long-range (20 years) perspective of the national labor market. According to the BLS (2004), from 1984 to 2004, the long-term national employment trend has had some moderate variation. Nonetheless, the national employment trend has been one of continuous growth overall.

Figure 2




Source: The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2004)

Figure 3




Source: The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2004)

Above, Figure 3 represents that the BLS (2004) reported that the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 5.5 percent in October 2004 and the jobless rate has been at or near its current level for the last 20-years. Figure 3

does represent significant unemployment spikes during that time. Nonetheless, in order for the national economy to remain vital and for workforce to be a possible educational choice of students, the United States unemployment rate must remain stable (Rivera, 2002).

As further evidence of a declining unemployment rate, non-farm payroll employment rose by 337,000 jobs in October 2004 and has risen by 2.2 million jobs since August 2003. Despite spikes in 1986, 1992, and 2003, this rate has remained essentially unchanged at 5.5 percent. Figure 3 represents a 20-year trend in unemployment across all occupational sectors. The employment/unemployment history confirms a need for more skilled workers. In summary, these trends should also be another indicator for the workforce chairperson to consider when determining program expectations particularly since workforce-related jobs account for two-thirds of all labor market employment (Bragg, 2001).

## Texas 2004 Workforce Salaries and Occupational Requirements

In the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, critics (Rhoads and Valadez, 1996; Griffin, 1987; Zwerling, 1974) argued that vocational education programs perpetuated social stratification because salary outcomes were inadequate and did not promote occupational crossover. However, Silverberg et al. (2004) and Bailey et al. (unpublished) conducted research that revealed that with the introduction of

the new vocationalism and the workforce education initiative, salary outcomes for graduates and completers of these programs have risen dramatically. In conducting a random sampling of workforce-related occupations and their associated salary outcomes, these researchers confirmed most workforce-related occupations generated positive salary outcomes.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2002), the average (yearly) salary in the state of Texas was $36,248. Tables 6 and 7 represent two random samplings of employment data from the Texas Workforce Commission's (2004) Workforce Salaries and Occupational website. These positions (i.e., chemical technicians and computer technicians) signify the type of arbitrary employment opportunities that could result from earning a workforce certificate or an applied associate degree offered at most community colleges. It is important to note that the salaries for each of the listed workforce occupations far exceeded the average salary paid in the state of Texas for 2004.

**Requirements, Salaries for Chemical Technicians in the State of Texas**

According to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) (2004), many employers required applicants for the chemical technician position to have at least 2-years of specialized training or an associate degree in applied science technology. In addition, in the state of Texas by 2010, employment forecasters

have projected a job growth for chemical technicians of 6.7% (see Table 6) with beginning salary of over forty thousand dollars annually.

Table 6

| **Chemical Technicians** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual Salary: | $42,360.00 | | | |
| Texas Openings: | | | | |
| | Annual Average Employment | | Annual Average Job Openings | |
| | 2000 | 7300 | Growth | 52 |
| | 2010 | 7820 | Rplmnt | 170 |
| | Change Rate | 6.649% | Total | 222 |

Texas Workforce Commission (2004)

To meet this demand, most community college workforce programs should continue to offer associate degrees in this field, but also design chemical tech programs that can be easily transferred to a four-year college or university. Based on Townsend's (2003b) research that attempted to understand better the behavior impact of reverse transfer students on community colleges, non-credit flexible-entry workforce programs should also be crafted to accommodate those persons who have already obtained baccalaureate status-but would like a job change.

**The Requirements, Salaries for Computer Support Specialists**

The random sampling of current wage information for the position of computer support specialists (in Texas 2004) as represented in Table 7 is some $9,000 above the statewide income average. This should, to some degree, help validate, Silverberg et al. (2004) and Gillum and Davies' (2003) claims of the increased earning potential for workforce students who complete community college vocational programs. Additionally, Table 7 displays a 46.02% occupational growth rate in just one decade.

Table 7

| **Computer Support Specialists** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual Salary: | | | $42,560.00 | |
| Texas Openings: | | | | |
| | Annual Average Employment | | Annual Average Job Openings | |
| | 2000 | 39270 | Growth | 3349 |
| | 2010 | 72760 | Rplmnt | 165 |
| | Change Rate | 46.02% | Total | 3514 |

Texas Workforce Commission (2004)

As represented in Table 7, upon earning a computer-related associate degree, according to the TWC (2004), computer support specialists at hardware and software companies often enjoy great upward mobility - with advancement sometimes coming within months of their initial employment.

## WORKFORCE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW AT HCCS

Community colleges and technical institutes must meet a broad spectrum of educational needs and workforce demands. Consequently, they must systematically assess their program's relevance and quality. Improvement of instruction, updating of programs, and efficient use of resources are the real purposes of occupational program evaluation. (Martinez & Echord, 1987, p. 77)

Wenrich and Wenrich (1974) took the position that some educational administrators and even faculty have been reluctant and even cynical when evaluating their programs because they have been unsure of what the program's objectives were and they believed that their program had not accomplished its objectives. Nata (2005) implied that at the core of every workforce education program should be a well-organized, data-driven evaluation process. Moreover, Nata underscored the importance of all organizational members understanding exactly what the process was and its relevancy. At HCCS, the rationale, intent, objectives, and process for workforce program evaluation have been *clearly* detailed in the HCCS' Educational Plan, 2001.

The plan states that the intent of workforce program review (as mentioned in Rualf and Ayres, 1987) is to maintain program relevance and quality, help workforce programs improve performance, plan for the future, and achieve

"stated" departmental and institutional goals. Furthermore, the process of review occurs on a four-year cycle. The method of program review was derived from the following: SACS performance indicators, THECB measures and standards, and HCCS strategic goals and objectives. Below is a list of HCCS' performance [critical success] indicators (HCCS' Educational Plan, 2001).

**Performance [Critical Success] Indicators**

- Planning – mission/purpose, documentation of need, and customer (student and employer) satisfaction
- Student Outcomes – student enrollment, contact hours, completion rates, placement rates, and licensure/certificate exam pass rates, etc.
- Curriculum and Instruction – professional and accreditation guidelines, admission policies, established linkages with business and industry, appropriate of instruction, etc.
- Faculty - adequate number and competent, provide professional development, and ensure teaching effectiveness
- Resources – provide library and learning resources, facilities, instructional support services, budget, and local advisory committee. (HCCS' Educational Plan, 2001, p. 27)

Following are the major steps necessary for a workforce program to conduct a self-study. (HCCS' Educational Plan, 2001, p. 27)

1. Each August, the Office of Workforce Development (OWFD) identifies the programs scheduled for review that year.
2. The respective deans, along with their program chairs and faculty attend orientation/training session to review the evaluation's process and procedure for the program's self-study.
3. In consultation with the workforce dean and college president [as appropriate], the program chair leads the self-study and summarizes the program's strengths, weaknesses, and make plans for improvement.
4. A visiting team of HCCS workforce faculty reviews the self-study and reports the outcomes to the OWFD.
5. The OWFD arranges a Deans' Council to discuss these outcomes and proposed program improvement plans.
6. Final comments on findings from the Deans' Council and the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development are presented to the Executive Team.
7. Program chairpersons are asked to make annual progress reports until [the fourth year] when the process will begin again.

## Greenville Technical College

Vocational education is occurring in an environment of new technologies, global competition, and changing demographics that is transforming community colleges. Leaders with foresight and courage will have a positive influence on their institutions and promote the new vocationalism. [At Greenville Technical college] Leaders were willing to seek innovative solutions to old problems by collaborating and building new partnerships with other institutions and agencies. The scope of vocational education occurring at Greenville Tech goes far beyond conventional practices, illustrating [again] numerous examples of the new vocationalism. (Summer, 2001, p.17-22)

Summer (2001) discovered the leadership at Greenville Technical College (GTC) had the foresight and courage and had a positive influence on the institution's ability to promote the new vocationalism. As Roueche et al. (1989) claimed, foresight is a quintessential characteristic of transformational leadership and provides individuals with an innate sense of influencing positive organizational change.

Case in point: Because of the transformational leadership at GTC, in its only 40-year history, it has evolved to become the largest urban two-year public institution in South Carolina and the premiere choice for business and industrial

education. Summer further implied that the leadership at GTC has enabled organizational members to view workforce education unconventionally. Because of these substantial partnerships and its workforce ingenuity, GTC now has four campuses, offers 130 academic programs, and has an annual enrollment of 43,807 unduplicated headcount in credit and non-credit programs (Greenville Technical College Website, 2005). The college offers academic and technical courses, certificates, associate degrees, and university transfer.

## Substantial Partnerships

GTC established several strategic partnerships with the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Michelin, General Electric, Hitachi, and Bausch & Lomb, most recently the Greenville Hospital System, and numerous others (Zimmerman, 2004). In 1998, GTC helped form the Upstate Training Alliance Board of Directors (UTABD). The UTABD established worker-training programs at GTC; the $200,000 in recurring state funding assist with free tuition, credit courses, books, benefits, and salary (Summers, 2001). These programs and services are provided at no cost for students selected by the participating companies of the UTABD, which also financially contribute to the program. The member companies expect to hire these students on a full-time basis once they complete their training. In an effort to keep the training current and relevant to

their needs, member companies also design, develop, and review program curriculum.

## Workforce Ingenuity

> Technical careers are the way of the future … new courses and programs are constantly being added to help area employees stay current and prepare students for projected needs of regional and state businesses. (Greenville Technical College's Website, 2005)

GTC seems committed to for-credit workforce programming; however, they provide a varied offering of continuing education courses for their business and industrial community. The college serves approximately 13,600 individual curriculum students fall semester and has over 52,000 registrations annually in continuing education (GTC's Website, 2005). Continuing education courses offer business and industry an efficient way to train employees and flexible entry for the students. The continuing education division of the college, named the Buck Mickel Center (BMC), serves over 2,000 companies, and offers more than 450 courses in seven major areas of study. Upon completion of their educational goals, the majority of graduates either are employed in fields related to their programs of study or transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

GTC has also been innovative in establishing its GTC Charter High School, a tuition-free dual enrollment program. GTC has touted the creation of strong partnerships between faculty and staff of the high school and the college. This partnership has been particularly useful in exposing students to various occupations and getting them prepared for "real-world" employment opportunities. According to Bragg (2001), "this unique partnership has expanded the traditional boundaries of articulation and curriculum integration to new levels (p.21).

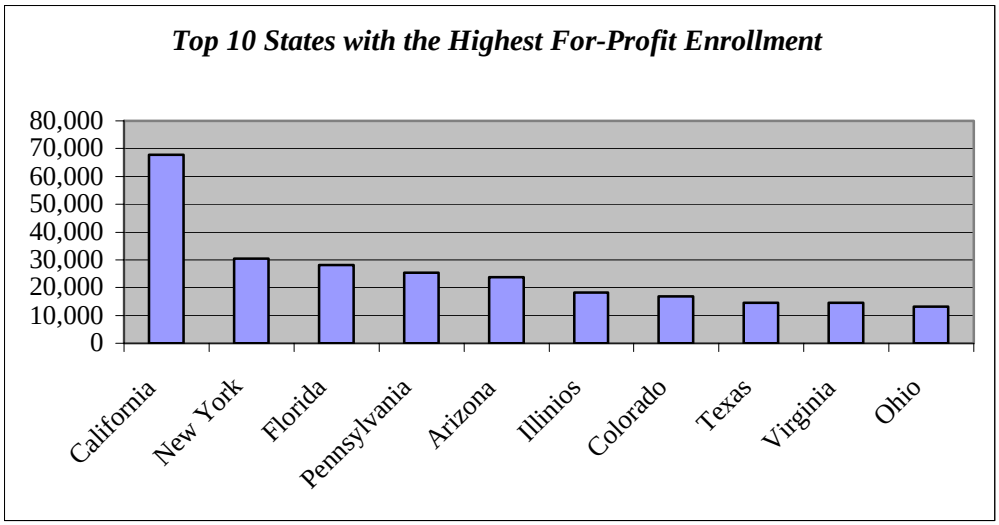
## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FOR WORKFORCE EFFECTIVENESS

Prior to this point, the literature review focused primarily on factors that could improve workforce program effectiveness (e.g., leadership, curriculum development, enrollment management, marketing, economic conditions and occupational trends, etc). Now, the literature review will examine two of the most pervasive challenges that have had the potential to undermine workforce program effectiveness in the last decade. The literature focused, first, on the outgrowth of career-based [for-profit] proprietary institutions intruding into territory once held exclusively by community college workforce programs (Lee & Merisotis, 1990). The second challenge discussed was [outsourcing] the practice of American companies sending an ever-increasing number of mid-level jobs to foreign countries (Davidson, 2003).

## Workforce-Based Proprietary Institutions

Proprietary institutions (otherwise known as for-profits or career schools) are not a new concept. Proprietary institutions predate the creation of the first public junior college. Honik (1995) reported hapless private vocational institutions were founded during the Colonial Era around 1636. Clowes (1995) reported that, until the late 1980s, many educational practitioners viewed proprietary schools as *the silent partners* in higher education. To the surprise of many, as represented in Table 8, these so-called silent partners are not silent any more (Stevenson, 2003).

Table 8




Source: Community College weekly, 2005

From 1989 - 1998, Bagnato (2005) reported a 59% student enrollment increase in the for-profit sector while the public educational sector experienced only a 6% increase. Cheng and Levin (1995) emphasized what should be most troubling to workforce chairpersons were the growing similarities between for-profits and two-year vocational programs. Clowes (1995) and Hittman (1995) both noted for-profits had converged into high-tech occupational markets previously held by community colleges. In fact, data from the 2001 Report from the Commission of the States that ranked the states with the largest—for-profit enrollment growth and Texas ranked eighth on the list (Bagnato, 2005).

### The Rationale for Proprietary Institutions' Enrollment Increases

Why have proprietary institutions' enrollment increased so rapidly? Brannick (1987) inferred that the escalation in enrollment was due to an intensified media and marketing blitz. Proprietary institutions have congested the print and electronic media with aggressive, effective advertising, and targeted commercials. Bagnato (2005) and Johnson (1987) summarized that for-profits were much better at developing links to employers than community colleges, offering the latest business-centered training, accelerated completion times, and job placement opportunities for completers.

Bagnato (2005) viewed the enrollment successes of the proprietary institutions as [both] an opportunity for learning and an opportunity for the

convergence of ideals. Brannick declared workforce operations should learn to emulate and use those same strategies that have been so effective for the for-profits (i.e., offer only profitable programs, stay market-driven, and improve program and institutional financial aid opportunities). Honick (1995) affirmed that community college must converge *some* of the proprietary operating strategies into their workforce programs. However, workforce practitioners should remain optimistic because Honick deduced that proprietary schools do have two inherent flaws: (1) they do not concentrate on teaching/learning but, rather focus on generating revenue and (2) many of them continue to have limited vocational program offerings.

## The Outsourcing of American Jobs Overseas

Why does outsourcing have the potential to be such a problematic issue to the vitality of workforce education? Brown (2003) suggested the cornerstone of workforce effectiveness hinges upon an aspirant's perception of employment after training. In the last decade, this perception of immediate employment is dimming because (1) more companies are outsourcing and (2) the number of positions being outsourced within companies continues to increase. To emphasize this point, Yourdon (2005) quoted a CNN (2004) article that reported a major Texas computer manufacturer had over 50% of its employees (24,000 of its 46,000 employees) based in India, Panama, Slovakia, Morocco, and China.

Yourdon (2005) also cited a study by the Cutter Consortium (2003), which found that 64.2% of American companies that outsourced did so as a means of reducing their employee wage/salary cost. Yourdon (2005) supported this assumption and offered this example as further evidence of why American companies are intensifying their outsourcing efforts.

> The typical [India] salary for an entry-level, university-educated computer programmer was approximately $4,000 per year. At the time, the typical salary for an entry-level American programmer was about $25,000. More significantly, the U.S. minimum wage was $3.35 per hour in 1989, which meant that a full-time employee at Burger King or McDonald's could expect to earn $6,700 per year. (p. 8)

In the interest of symmetry, the outcome of outsourcing is not exactly clear when considering counterarguments to outsourcing from the Bush administration and recent Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2004) data indicating there has been no long-term permanent rise in the unemployment rate. The rationalization from President George W. Bush's administration, according to Weisman (2004), suggests that outsourcing may be somewhat painful at first, but over-time, it would enrich the United States economy by creating 1.7 million new jobs. However, Gongloff (2003) countered by saying this policy has not improved the economy, but only served to increase corporate earnings. Furthermore,

Weisman (2004) argued that since Bush has been in office, 2.2 million jobs have disappeared and not been replaced.

Gongloff (2003) reported similar findings as well as suggested the loss in American jobs had begun to span across multiple employment sectors (information technology, manufacturing, and the service industry). Weisman expanded this thought by saying that outsourcing no longer just impacts high-tech jobs but has even begun to invade the low-tech sector, influencing service—semi-professional, and professional positions. Honick (1995) echoed the sheer number of jobs lost and how the variation of occupational fields could prove to be extremely difficult for everyone concerned: the community college, the for-profits, and the workforce students.

## SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature discussed a broad range of information, techniques, and practical strategies that could assist the HCCS workforce chairperson or other vocational practitioners to administer more effectively their career and technical programs. These practical strategies were based upon several factors (e.g., positive dean/chair relationship, visionary leadership, faculty development, enrollment management, effective advisory committees, sound program budgeting, constant program evaluation, etc.) that have been known to influence workforce program efficiency positively.

Warren (1993) recommended that the dean and the chairperson—to accomplish program objectives better—should think of themselves as vocational partners and seek to work affably. Roueche et al. (1989) suggested that program leadership should and could transform and motivate faculty and staff to higher levels of organizational commitment and departmental productivity. Lastly, Wenrich and Wenrich's (1974) strategy to improve curriculum development called for the program chairperson to ask the following question constantly: "Does the curriculum need to be revised, updated, or discontinued?" If a curriculum change is required, then, the chairperson should involve the advisory committee, department members, and the business and industrial community. Some of these strategies may require modification to match different program needs. Moreover, since they were based on valid research, they may still prove to be a legitimate resource for the vocational educator.

Conversely, the literature review also identified and discussed potential challenges to workforce program effectiveness (e.g., the emergence of career—based proprietary institutions and the outsourcing of American jobs overseas). Regarding outsourcing, Yourdon (2005) quoted a CNN (2004) article that reported that some major manufacturers had nearly 50% of their employees based overseas. On the other hand, the Bush administration and recent Bureau of

Labor and Statistics (2004) data indicate outsourcing has had only minimum effects on the unemployment rate.

Finally, the literature review benchmarked the successful workforce operation at Greenville Technical College (GTC). The key to GTC's success appears to hinge on three characteristics: visionary [transformation] leadership, the establishment of partnerships, and workforce ingenuity. As an example of the college's workforce ingenuity, GTC's enrollment is less than HCCS but GTC has over 52,000 registrations annually in continuing education. GTC's high volume of continuing education units (CEU's) may be one of the preeminent factors in its workforce programming success. CEU's allow more flexibility to meet the needs of business by rapidly bringing courses online and training employees faster. CEU's also provide students open-entry classes and eliminate the need to take unwanted or unnecessary general education classes (Townsend, 2003a).

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The researcher has both personal and professional interest in the effectiveness of workforce educational programming. Personally, he took several high school vocational classes and earned a workforce-related associate degree at a two-year college (after his military service) before reentering the labor market. Professionally, the researcher has over 10 years of actual workforce experience in the field before his seven-year tenure as a very effective workforce department chairperson at a community college.

The researcher believes that workforce education programs have the potential to be a "double-edge" sword. Non-compliant workforce programs could seriously dampen the educational opportunities and the financial rewards of the students, hindering them from fully participating in the best of the American dream (Gillum & Davies, 2003; Townsend, 2003b). Conversely, research has also shown that compliant or effective workforce programs have the ability to cause social mobility and occupational crossover (Silverberg et al., 2004). For this reason, community college workforce education programs have been called the "great equalizer" of the new millennium (Hancock, 2001).

Given the numerous advantages of compliant workforce programs, the researcher wanted to determine what caused programs to be effective by determining the influence of certain factors (e.g., visionary leadership, faculty development, enrollment management, effective advisory committees, program budgeting, marketing, etc.). To understand these factors' influence, the researcher attempted to examine all HCCS workforce chairpersons. These program chairpersons were separated into two distinct groups, those who supervised compliant workforce programs and those who supervised non-compliant workforce programs based on THECB student placement and graduate criteria.

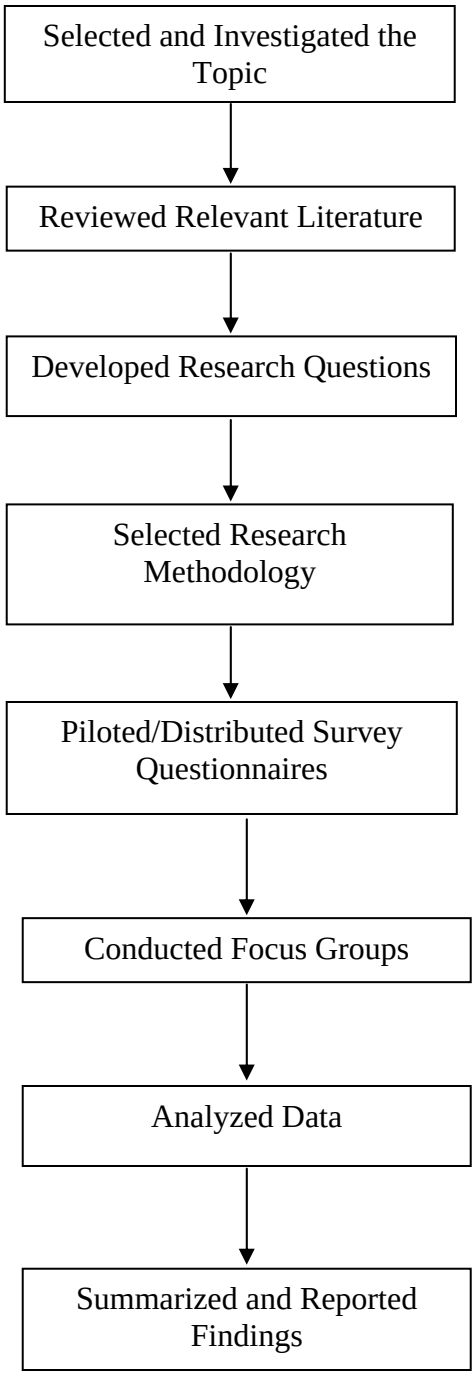
A comparable survey questionnaire was electronically distributed to both groups of compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons. Group One (compliant) and Group Two (non-compliant) also participated in two independent focus groups, in which the same discussion questions were asked of both groups. Based on similarities/dissimilarities between the two groups, the researcher's aim was to devise systematic strategies, innovations, and recommendations that would help augment the performance of non-compliant workforce programs at HCCS. The researcher used three strategic research questions as the guide for the study.

## Research Questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?
2. Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?
3. Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential/detrimental to their program rating?

Figure 4

**Research Design and Organization**



## DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECTS

The subjects could be best described as: 32 of 43 HCCS workforce chairpersons who provided workforce program leadership either on an interim or a permanent basis, who ranged in age from 30 to 60 years old, male and female, various ethnicities, educational levels, and were housed throughout HCCS' five-colleges during the spring semester of 2005. Each chairperson had a minimum of an earned associate degree and at least 36-months of industrial experience in their respective discipline. However, the majority held bachelors and master's degrees and some were at the doctoral degree level.

According to the Workforce Program Chair List (2004), HCCS had a total of 70 for-credit workforce programs that 43 chairpersons supervised. Several chairpersons supervised multiple workforce programs. Sixteen of the forty-three chairpersons (37.2 %) supervised two or more programs. The remaining 27 workforce chairpersons (62.7%) supervised only one program. Seven of the 16 chairpersons supervised between three to five workforce programs. However, the THECB (2003) Annual Data Profile indicated that several workforce chairpersons who supervised multiple programs - both compliant and non-compliant programs.

Conversely, Table 9 identifies those HCCS workforce program groups that are non-compliant and compliant (i.e., placements or graduates) and are under the supervision of a single chairperson. The yellow and green sections are multiple

workforce programs under the direct supervision of a single program chairperson. Within Table 9, workforce programs that are compliant the ***text*** will remain unchanged. However, the workforce programs that are non-compliant for placements have been coded in **red** and those that are—non-compliant for graduates have been coded in **blue**.

Table 9

**Programs Supervised by a Single Program Chairperson**

| | |
|---|---|
| Business Administration | BioTech |
| International Business | Chemical Laboratory Technology |
| **Marketing Management & Research** | Environmental Technology |
| **Carpentry** | **Advertising Arts** |
| **Building Maintenance Trade** | Fashion Design |
| **Construction Technology** | Fashion Merchandising |
| **Industrial Electricity** | Interior Design |
| **Heating, A/C, Refrigeration** | **Photographic Technology** |
| **Manufacturing Engineering Tech.** | **Culinary Arts** |
| **Machining Technology** | **Hotel/Restaurant Management** |
| **Welding** | **Travel and Tourism** |
| Diagnostic Medical Sonography | **Clinical Laboratory Technician** |
| Nuclear Medicine Technology | Histologic Technology |

Table 9 (Continued)

**Compliant and Non-Compliant Programs Supervised by a Single Program Chairperson**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Music In Performance** | BioTech |
| Music Arranging, Comp. & Production | Chemical Laboratory Technology |
| **Music Business** | Environmental Technology |
| Computer & Information Science Tech | Cardiovascular |
| Computer Science Technology | Radiography |
| Digital Communication | **Horticulture Technology** |
| Digital Communication | **Veterinary Assistant** |
| Human Service Technology | Financial Management |
| **Interpreting/Transliterating Tech.** | Legal Assistant Technology |
| Film Production | |
| **Communication Technologies** | |

## SELECTION OF THE SUBJECTS

As a matter of proper protocol, before any workforce program chairpersons were contacted, the researcher used their "chain of command." First, permission was requested and received from the associate vice chancellor of workforce development to initiate the study. The researcher contacted each of the five workforce deans and briefly explained the purpose and objectives of the impending study. The deans were given an opportunity to share their insights as well as ask questions regarding the study's scope and intent. Having formally introduced the study to the senior administration, the researcher sought to contact each workforce program chairperson.

The researcher secured an [December 2004] institutional list of every workforce program chairperson from the system's office of workforce development. The list contained current workforce program chairpersons' contact information (e. g., program title, name of chair, name of administrative assistant, office number, and the chairperson's email address). Subsequently, the researcher personally contacted workforce chairpersons by email and asked for verification of their position. Once the verification was received, each chairperson was notified of their opportunity to participate in the upcoming survey and/or focus groups. There was no prescreening of these subjects; all 43 full-time active workforce program chairpersons at HCCS were invited to participate in the study

## DESCRIPTION OF WORKFORCE PROGRAMS BY COLLEGE

### Compliant and Non-Compliant Programs

The study involved 70 for-credit workforce programs housed throughout HCCS' multi-campus system (i.e., central, northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest). Each program varied by occupational type, student characteristics, and departmental administration. Some workforce chairpersons supervised multiple programs; of these, some of their programs were rated as: compliant, non-compliant, or both compliant/non-compliant.

According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 2003 Annual Data Profile for successful outcomes for placement and graduates [as provide by HCCS' Office of Workforce Development], 23 of the 70 (32.86%) programs were non-compliant for (either) placement, graduates - or in the case of the music program both. Of the five HCCS campuses that were studied, Central College's non-compliant rating appeared the highest at 55% (11 of the 20).

Below, Tables 9 – 13 have been color coded to represent the programs by college that are compliant and those that are not. Workforce programs that are non compliant for placements are coded in **red** and those that are not compliant for graduates are coded in **blue**.

**Workforce Programs [Compliant and Non-Compliant] Identified by College**

Table 10

| | Central College |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Advertising Arts** |
| 2 | Financial Management |
| 3 | Carpentry |
| **4** | **Building Maintenance Trade** |
| **5** | **Child Development** |
| **6** | **Construction Technology** |
| **7** | **Culinary Arts** |
| **8** | **Industrial Electricity** |
| 9 | Health & Physical Edu/Fitness |
| 10 | Fashion Design |
| 11 | Fashion Merchandising |
| **12** | **Hotel/Restaurant Management** |
| **13** | **Heating, A/C, Refrigeration** |
| 14 | Interior Design |
| **15** | **Manufacturing Engineering Tech.** |
| 16 | Legal Assistant Technology |
| 17 | Machining Technology |
| **18** | **Photographic Technology** |
| 19 | Travel & Tourism |
| **20** | **Welding** |

Table 11

| | Southeast College |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Human Service Technology** |
| 2 | Dental Assisting |
| 3 | Cardiovascular |
| 4 | Emergency Medical Services |
| 5 | Health Information Technology |
| 6 | Medical Assistant |
| **7** | **Clinical Laboratory Technician** |
| 8 | Histologic Technology |
| 9 | Radiography |
| 10 | Diagnostic Medical Sonography |
| 11 | Nuclear Medicine Technology |
| 12 | Occupational Therapy Assistant |
| 13 | Pharmacy Technician |
| 14 | Physical Therapy Assistant |
| 15 | Nursing |
| 16 | Respiratory Therapy |
| 17 | Surgical Technology |
| 18 | Vocational Nursing |
| 19 | Business Technology |
| **20** | **Interpreting/Transliterating Tech.** |

Table 12

| | Northwest College |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Cosmetology** |
| 2 | Environmental Technology |
| 3 | Film Production |
| **4** | **Horticulture Technology** |
| 5 | Music In Performance |
| 6 | Communication Technologies |
| **7** | **Veterinary Paramedic** |
| 8 | Music Arranging, Comp. & Production |
| **9** | **Music** |

Table 13

| | Southwest College |
|---|---|
| 1 | Accounting |
| 2 | Geography (GIS) |
| 3 | Computer & Information Science Tech |
| 4 | Computer Science Technology |
| **5** | **Real Estate** |
| 6 | Broadcast Technology |
| **7** | **Digital Communication** |
| 8 | Digital Communication |

Table 14

| | Northeast College |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Automotive Technology** |
| 2 | Bio-Tech |
| 3 | Business Administration |
| 4 | Electronic Engineering Technology |
| 5 | Criminal Justice |
| 6 | Chemical Laboratory Technology |
| 7 | Diesel Engine Mechanic & Repairer |
| 8 | Drafting/Design Technology |
| 9 | Fire Protection Technology |
| **10** | **International Business** |
| 11 | Logistics |
| **12** | **Marketing Management & Research** |
| 13 | Public Administration |

## DATA COLLECTION

Researchers have long debated which methodology is best for social science studies – quantitative or qualitative (Patton, 1990). To add validity, a mixed-method approach was used to collect data. An instrument [survey questionnaires] was used to gather the numerical data and focus groups were used to gather qualitative [feelings, beliefs, and perceptions] data.

## THE INSTRUMENT

What is quantitative research and why was it employed at HCCS? Quantitative research is a systematic attempt to define, measure, and report on the relationships between various variables/factors and produce numerical data that can be statistically analyzed (Patten, 2002). Questionnaires are used as an effective approach to gather quantitative data (particularly from large groups). (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996). Survey questionnaires were used at HCCS because the researcher sought to define, measure, and report the responses of a large group [43 workforce program chairpersons] of research subjects numerically.

### The Design of the Instrument

The researcher reviewed several instruments that had been used in other vocational related studies (Rivera, 2002; Arky, 1982) as well as examples from SurveyShare, an Internet surveying organization, for an appropriate model. Based on variations from all of the aforementioned sources and taking into account the literature review, the nature of the research questions, and the time constraints of the workforce program chairpersons, the researcher developed the Workforce Program Effectiveness Profile (WFPEP). The WFPEP was Internet-based and consisted of 30 open and closed-ended questions [see Appendix B] and could be completed in less than 20 minutes. The structure of the WFPEP instrument was based upon the study's three research questions.

**The Structure of the Instrument**

- Questions 1 – 3 addressed demographic information.
- Questions 4 – 6 addressed industrial and supervisory experience.
- Questions 7 – 9 addressed business collaborations, industrial partnerships, and, professional affiliations.
- Questions 10 – 11 addressed the number of programs the chairperson supervises.
- Questions 12 – 15 addressed the importance of faculty development.
- Questions 16 – 17 addressed program marketing strategies and success.
- Questions 18 – 19 addressed curriculum planning and advisory involvement.
- Questions 20 – 22 addressed program budgeting and the request for grants.
- Questions 23 – 27 addressed enrollment management: recruitment, retention, and student growth.
- Question 28 addressed perceived barriers that have most “hindered” workforce program effectiveness.
- Question 29 addressed perceived factors that have most ‘improved’ workforce program effectiveness.
- Question 30 addressed the workforce chairperson’s working relationship with the college president, the dean, their advisory committee, and the community.

## The Description of the Pilot Test

Pilot tests of the survey questionnaire should be conducted as a means of improving the understandability of the questionnaire. Tuckman (1999) stated, "most studies benefit substantially from the precaution of running tests on their questionnaires, leading to revisions based on the results of the tests" (p. 256) .The WPEP was pilot tested following committee approval of the dissertation proposal and approval of the IRB from the University of Texas at Austin Office of Research Support and Compliance.

The instrument was pilot tested in its "original" pencil and paper version on four (approximately 10%) of the 43 workforce program chairpersons. Initially three questionnaires were returned intercampus mail as planned; return of the fourth questionnaire required a reminder email. The four chairpersons requested wording and formatting changes to questions: 8, 16, and 30.

These subsequent changes were made to the questionnaire without further communication with the study's pilot group. The researcher then converted and uploaded the pencil and paper version to an electronic questionnaire format. The Internet-based questionnaire version was not pilot-tested since it had been previously reviewed; essentially the Internet-based questionnaire contained the same questions as its pencil and paper predecessor.

## The Delivery of the Instrument

As a matter of proper protocol, before any workforce program chairpersons were contacted, the researcher utilized the "chain of command" to ensure all senior administrators were informed. The researcher notified the vice chancellor of educational development, the associate vice chancellor of workforce development, and the five workforce deans before sending the Internet-based questionnaires. The workforce deans were given an opportunity to share their insights as well as ask questions regarding the study's intent and methodology.

The researcher secured an institutional list of every workforce program chairperson from the system's office of workforce development. Using this contact information, the researcher sought to verify the accuracy of the email addresses, confirm the program chairpersons' position, and inform the workforce program chairpersons of the impending study. In addition, the researcher provided user passwords and detailed instructions on how to access the electronic documents. Upon successful confirmation, the Internet-based questionnaire was sent to all 43-workforce program chairpersons (from the researcher's HCCS email account). The researcher divided his address book in to two categories or groups. Group One [compliant] consisted of 30 chairpersons' emails and Group Two [non-compliant] consisted of 13 chairpersons' emails. Identical web-based questionnaires were sent to both groups from the researcher's HCCS email.

## FOCUS GROUPS ONE AND TWO [COMPLIANT AND NON-COMPLIANT]

In addition to using a numerically based quantitative Internet-based questionnaire, the researcher thought a human-centered qualitative focus group approach would add additional personal perspectives, insight, and balance to the study. Scheurich (1997) implied the qualitative approach has been very useful in social science research when telling educational related stories. The qualitative approach is a free form of investigation that uses human insight to gain and identify underlying individual feelings, beliefs, and issues of similar research problems. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) added that a critical component of a focus group is that the participants must share some commonalities.

Given this rationale, the focus group approach was employed at HCCS because (1) the researcher was studying similar groups (the workforce chairpersons) and (2) the focus group method would allow the researcher to delve into the feelings, opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of the workforce chairpersons. The researcher conducted two focus groups.

Focus Group One and Focus Group Two met on the same day at the same location [HCCS' Systems Office – room 12B13], but the two groups met at different times. Focus Group One had 100% attendance—10 workforce chairpersons were invited and 10 attended. Focus Group Two had 90% attendance—10 chairpersons were invited, but only nine attended. Because many

of HCCS' chairpersons, in addition to their administrative responsibilities, have teaching obligations, their workforce deans recommended that the focus groups be conducted on a Friday at noon. Friday, February 25, 2005, Group One met from 12:00 - 1:00 PM. Group Two met from 1:30 - 2:30 PM. Lunch was provided to each group courtesy of the Office of Workforce Development. The researcher served as the moderator for both groups; however, two colleagues from the Community College Leadership Program assisted as note takers in the collection of data, one with the first group and one with the second group.

To collect data, the researcher asked five specific questions (see Appendix C) intended to foster an extended discussion among the program chairpersons that centered on the single issue of workforce program compliance. Because of the structure of the focus group format, the program chairpersons introduced subsequent factors causing additional discussions to ensue. Each focus group was limited to one hour.

**Design Considerations for the Focus Groups One and Two**

(The following was based largely on Krueger, 1998b)

- **Focus Group Flexibility.** Initially, Focus Groups One and Two were designed to be asked identical questions; however, Krueger (1998b) stated each moderator needs to follow his/her instincts about what questions will elicit interest among the group.

- **The Researcher Asked Open-ended Questions.** The workforce program chairpersons were asked only open-ended questions in an effort to draw upon their personal beliefs, professional experiences, and organizational attitudes towards workforce program effectiveness at HCCS. To ensure accuracy, the researcher used the triangulation method in asking the chairpersons follow-up questions.
- **The Researcher Designed Questions that Were Clear.** The researcher asked the program chairpersons questions that were simple and unambiguous. Occasionally, responses included some vocational, industrial, and workforce terminology; however, the researcher made certain everyone in the group understood the meaning.
- **Workforce Chairpersons Were Encouraged to Reflect.** Despite the one-hour time constraint, the chairpersons were encouraged to reflect on various program shortcomings and benefits, such as professional development, budgets, advisory committees, marketing, community/college support, etc.
- **Focus Group Supplies.** As Northcutt and McCoy (2004) indicated, there were four essential prerequisites to be considered when designing a focus group: "draft research question, issue a statement, identify the group and gather tools" (p. 84). The tools gathered were index cards, markers, masking tape, available wall space, and tape recorders.

## TREATMENT OF THE DATA

### Analysis of Questionnaires

The statistical procedures used to present the findings from the questionnaires were descriptive statistics and frequency of distribution. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) declared descriptive studies are primarily concerned with describing, " what is" - natural or man-made phenomena – at one point in time or over time. This study identified two groups [compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons] at one college system at one point in time – the spring semester 2005. Data from each group of workforce chairpersons' survey questionnaires was primarily analyzed through frequency of distribution. The researcher used Microsoft Excel software to compare how the [aggregate] compliant workforce chairpersons in Group One compared to their non-compliant counterparts in Group Two. Results were presented in Chapter Four through a series of narratives, graphs, charts, and tables.

### Analysis of Focus Group Data

Unlike the questionnaires, which yield numerical or "hard data," focus group data tend not to be as straightforward or easy to analyze. This is not to imply these data are not useful, quite the contrary. The analysis of the workforce compliance focus groups was a "controlled" process whereby the researcher converted the workforce program chairperson's conversations into "rich" and

meaningful data (Krueger, 1998a). The strategy for data analysis was largely based on finding viable answers to the study's predetermined research questions. The researcher conducted the primary analysis *during* the focus groups by listening to the comments and concerns upon which groups mutually agreed and disagreed. The researcher used triangulation or repeated the chairs' statements to ensure interview accuracy. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed each focus group's audiotape and examined the interview transcriptions.

These interview transcripts added detail and provided specific examples of factors that the workforce chairperson believed contributed to workforce program compliance. In addition, the transcripts provided the researcher valuable insight into the groups' perceptions of organizational and institutional barriers that have hampered workforce compliance. Finally, from these transcripts, Focus Group One [workforce chairpersons that supervise compliant programs] and Group Two [workforce chairpersons that supervise non-compliant programs] transcripts were compared to affirm specific chairpersons' behaviors that could have possibly influenced their level of program effectiveness.

Next, from the interview transcripts, the researcher compiled and prioritized a list common workforce program supports and needs based upon the extensiveness and frequency of the program chairpersons' comments**.** Krueger (1998a) explained that frequency is the number of times a particular word or issue

was used or raised, regardless of who said it. Extensiveness is the number of different people who raised a particular concern or need. Further, the researcher also considered the intensity or strength of feelings convey in the comments.

Table 15

| Summary of Data Collection Outcomes | |
|---|---|
| Total Number of HCCS WF Chairpersons | 43 |
| Number of HCCS WF Programs | 70 |
| Number of Compliant Programs | 47 |
| Number of Non-Compliant Programs | 23 |
| WF Chairs that Supervise Multi-Programs | 16 |
| Total Responses to the WPEP Questionnaire | 32 |
| Responses to the Questionnaire from Group - 1 | 19 |
| Responses to the Questionnaire from Group - 2 | 13 |
| Response Rate from Group - 1 | 63.3 % |
| Response Rate from Group - 2 | 100 % |
| Number of Chairpersons Invited to Focus Group - 1 | 10 |
| Number of Chairpersons Invited to Focus Group - 2 | 10 |
| Number of Chairpersons Attended Focus Group - 1 | 10 |
| Number of Chairpersons Attended Focus Group - 1 | 9 |

## PROTECTION OF THE SUBJECTS

In accordance with Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) before beginning this research project, the researcher considered, "Would any physical or psychological harm come to anyone as a result of the research" (p. 37)? In the design of this study, precautionary steps were taken to protect all workforce chairpersons from any deliberate deception, serious discomfort, or harm. Prior consent was obtained from The University of Texas [IRB #: 2004-12-0029], HCCS, and the subjects themselves. Safeguards were employed to ensure confidentiality.

Regarding the collection of data, the Internet-based questionnaires were only distributed after the workforce program chairperson's email address had been verified. This procedure helped to ensure no one other than the program chairperson received and completed the document. Further, the Internet-based questionnaires did not contain any program specific information and were password protected to ensure confidentiality.

Regarding the collection of focus group data, each group was informed [in advanced] that the focus session would be taped-recorded. The researcher asked both groups to limit (as much as possible) the use of individual's names, colleges, and other identifiable program characteristics. Additionally, the researcher edited the focus group (interview) transcripts to protect the confidentiality of group members as well as other HCCS employees.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?
2. Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?
3. Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most detrimental/influential to their program rating?

## ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

All data reported in this chapter were collected from 32 of the 43 HCCS workforce chairpersons. The researcher separated the chairpersons in two groups [compliant and non-compliant] and employed two methods [quantitative and qualitative]; this approach yielded 12 data sets. In an effort to simplify their presentation, these data were organized and presented in the following order:

**Research Question One:**

Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Questionnaire Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

**Research Question Two:**

Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Questionnaire Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

**Research Question Three:**

Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairpersons]

Questionnaire Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

Focus Group Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairpersons]

**Summary -** Comparison of Aggregate Findings

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

### Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research Question One asked, "What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?"

Table 16

**Compliant Chair Gender, Age, and Educational Level**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| | Male | 9 | 52.94% |
| | Female | 8 | 47.06% |
| | **Total Responses** | 17 | 100% |
| **Age** | | | |
| | 30 - 34 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | 35 - 39 | 1 | 6.67% |
| | 40 - 44 | 1 | 6.67% |
| | 45 - 49 | 4 | 26.67% |
| | 50 - 54 | 4 | 26.67% |
| | 55 - 59 | 4 | 26.67% |
| | 60 - 64 | 1 | 6.67% |
| | 65 - 69 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | **Total Responses** | 15 | 100.00% |
| **Highest Level of Education** | | | |
| | Certificate | 1 | 5.26% |
| | Assoc Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 5 | 26.32% |
| | Master's Degree | 10 | 52.60% |
| | Doctoral Degree | 3 | 15.79% |
| | **Total Responses** | 19 | 100.00% |

**Gender**

Despite the assumption that modern vocational education programs are predominantly comprised of and supervised by males, Table 16 indicates no significant gender disparities among the compliant workforce chairpersons - nine (52.94%) were males and eight (47.06%) were females.

**Age**

In describing the frequency distributions in compliant workforce chairpersons' ages, one (6.67%) chairperson was between the age of 35-39 and one (6.67%) was between the ages of 40-44. However, the majority of compliant workforce chairpersons appeared to be between 45 and 54 years of age. More specifically, four (26.67%) were between the ages of 45-49, four (26.67%) were between the ages 50-54, and four (26.67%) were between the ages of 55-59. Only one (6.67%) chairperson reported being between 60-64 years of age.

**Highest Level of Education**

Analysis of Table 16 indicates that one (5.26%) compliant workforce chairperson held a certificate only. The researcher questioned this credential as there are state and institutional requirements that an individual must have a minimum of an associate degree to teach workforce courses. Further, five (26.32%) compliant chairpersons held bachelor's degrees. Notably, 13 (68.39) compliant workforce chairpersons completed post-graduate work.

Table 17

**Compliant Workforce Chairperson's Years of Industrial Experience**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Years of [Actual] Indstrl Exp** | | |
| 3 - 4 Years | 2 | 11.76% |
| 5 - 6 Years | 2 | 11.76% |
| 7 - 8 Years | 1 | 5.88% |
| 9 - 10 Years | 5 | 29.41% |
| 11 - 12 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 13 - 14 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 15 - 16 Years | 3 | 17.65% |
| 17 - 18 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 19 - 20 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| More than 20 Years | 4 | 23.53% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Years of Industrial Experience**

Table 17 indicates that approximately one-fourth of compliant workforce chairpersons have either 3-6, 9-10, 15-16, or more than 20 years of actual industrial experience. However, the researcher was unclear if these chairpersons counted HCCS externships as part of their actual industrial experience. Nonetheless, of those surveyed, two (11.76%) had 3-4 years of industrial experience, two (11.76%) had 5-6 years of industrial experience, one (5.88%) had at least 7-8 years of industrial experience, five (29.41%) had 9-10 years of experience, three (17.65%) had between 15-16 years of industrial experience, and four (23.53%) had an excess of 20 years of industrial experience.

Table 18

**Compliant Chairperson's Years of Supervising Workforce Programs**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Yr(s) Supervising WF Prgrms** | | |
| Less than One Year | 0 | 0.00% |
| 1 - 2 Years | 1 | 6.25% |
| 3 - 4 Years | 3 | 18.75% |
| 5 - 6 Years | 4 | 25.00% |
| 7 - 8 Years | 2 | 12.50% |
| 9 - 10 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 11 - 12 Years | 3 | 18.75% |
| 13 - 14 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 15 - 19 Years | 1 | 6.25% |
| More than 20 Years | 2 | 12.50% |
| **Total Responses** | 16 | 100.00% |

**Years Supervising Workforce Programs**

Both focus groups correlated chairperson longevity with workforce program compliance. HCCS' chairperson selection procedures limit chairpersons to a three-year term before they are eligible for reelection. Table 18 indicates that 50% of the chairs have served two-terms or less. Compliant and noncompliant chairs expressed that it takes about six years to become proficient in the position (i.e., establishing and cultivating partnerships, learning the review program process, gaining the confidence of faculty). Given these claims, 25% of the compliant chairs may be administratively disadvantaged.

Table 19

**Time Served - Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Year(s) Served as a HCCS Chairperson** | | |
| 1-2 Years | 2 | 14.29% |
| 3-4 Years | 3 | 21.43% |
| 5-6 Years | 2 | 14.29% |
| 7-8 Years | 1 | 7.14% |
| 9-10 Years | 2 | 14.29% |
| 11-12 Years | 1 | 7.14% |
| 13-14 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 15-19 Years | 1 | 7.14% |
| More than 20 Years | 2 | 14.29% |
| **Total Responses** | 14 | 100.00% |

**Year(s) Served as Chair**

Table 19 only indicates the years that an individual served as a HCCS workforce program chairperson. However, this table does not suggest that the chairperson was compliant or non-compliant for his/her complete tenure as chair. Nonetheless, the researcher discovered some workforce programs' performance status vacillated from year to year —compliant one year and not the next. For the compliant chairs, the largest concentration of tenure was 3-4 years (24.43%). All other categories appear to be equally distributed at 14.29%; the exception was [7-8, 11-12, and 15-19 years] at the 7.14% level.

Table 20

**Number of Faculty Supervised by Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Faculty Supervised** | | | |
| | 1 - 2 | 12 | 63.18% |
| | 3 - 5 | 6 | 31.56% |
| | 6 - 10 | 1 | 5.26% |
| | 11-15 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | **Total Responses** | 19 | 100.00% |

**Full-Time Faculty Supervised**

Nearly two-thirds (63.18%) of compliant workforce chairpersons only supervised 1-2 full-time faculty members. This finding was surprising since the compliant workforce chairpersons were instructed to answer this question based on (if applicable) the multiple workforce programs supervised. Nonetheless, six (31.56%) compliant workforce chairpersons stated they supervised 3-5 full-time faculty. Only one (5.26%) compliant workforce chairperson reported supervising between 6-10 full-time faculty members.

Since the majority compliant chairpersons only supervise 1-2 faculty, this could indicate that their workforce programs (1) may be reluctant to hire additional full-time faculty, (2) are very small programs, or (3) use a disproportioned number of adjunct faculty.

Table 21

**Number of Adjunct Supervised by Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct Faculty Supervised** | | |
| 1 - 3 | 2 | 13.33% |
| 4 - 8 | 5 | 33.33% |
| 9 - 13 | 4 | 26.67% |
| 14 - 18 | 2 | 13.33% |
| More than 19 adjuncts | 2 | 13.33% |
| **Total Responses** | 15 | 100.00% |

**Adjunct Faculty Supervised**

As with most community colleges, HCCS employs more adjuncts than full-time faculty for its instructional needs. Over 50% of the compliant workforce chairpersons supervised 4-13 adjunct faculty members. Table 21 illustrates that two (13.33%) compliant workforce chairpersons indicated supervising 1-3 adjunct faculty, five (33.33%) compliant chairpersons indicated supervising 4-8 adjunct faculty, four (26.67%) compliant chairpersons indicated supervising 9-13 adjunct faculty, two (13.33%) compliant chairpersons indicated supervising 14-18 adjunct faculty, and two (13.33%) indicated supervising more than 19 adjunct faculty. These findings may be based upon compliant workforce chairpersons supervising multiple programs; nonetheless, these finding may also suggest that HCCS compliant workforce programs use a generous number of adjunct faculty.

Table 22

**Number of Staff Supervised by Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Staff Supervised [Non-Faculty]** | | |
| 1 - 2 | 9 | 64.29% |
| 3 - 5 | 4 | 28.57% |
| 6 - 10 | 1 | 7.14% |
| 11 - 15 | 0 | 0.00% |
| More than 16 staff members | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 14 | 100.00% |

**Staff Supervised [Non-Faculty]**

Over one-third (approx. 37%) of both compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons supervised multiple workforce programs; this could also suggest multiple sets of paperwork, which could insinuate that the chairpersons' claims of too much paperwork were accurate. In further support, Table 22 indicated that nine (64.29%) compliant workforce chairpersons' supervised only 1-2 non-faculty staff. These finding could also sustain the chairpersons' claims that there was a lack of administrative support in completing their administrative functions. Additionally, four (28.57%) compliant workforce chairpersons indicated they supervised 3-5 staff members. Only one (7.14%) compliant workforce chair reported supervising a staff of 6-10 individuals.

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

### Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research question one asked, "What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?" In asking this question, the researcher sought to elicit compliant workforce chairpersons' perceptions regarding their industrial experience, administrative backgrounds, and longevity as program chairpersons – and correlate these factors with their [acceptable] program rating.

Unbeknownst to the researcher, this question unearthed a somewhat pessimistic feeling towards HCCS' chairperson selection policy. The compliant chairpersons' responses were related to the fact that after a three-year term, the chairperson must face reelection for his/her position.

Below are several examples of the compliant workforce chairpersons' perceptions of supervising workforce programs and their strong responses that materialized during the compliant workforce chairpersons' focus group session. The compliant chairpersons' responses were associated with their general dislike for the chair selection policy and their perception that long-term tenure is a key component of supervising a compliant workforce program.

**Perceptions of Supervising Compliant Workforce Programs**

Compliant Workforce Chair 1 said, “I think the longer you’re a chair; the more people you interact with in the industry, in the community, and the more relationships you build…” Compliant Workforce Chair 5 stated, “I’ve been a chair for _____ years so I’ve had a long run of being a chair - so I think the longer you are in that position, the more you can cultivate industry/business and student relationships, which means the more effective you can become.” Compliant Workforce Chair 3 agreed, “Being a department chair for more than a few years is the key. It all comes down to a long-term thing; it’s about having enough time to build relationships…”

**Perceptions of Compliant Workforce Faculty**

As it the relates to faculty characteristics, Focus Group One’s [compliant] workforce chairpersons findings revealed that most chairpersons had a very high regard for their faculty and, specifically, correlated their level of program effectiveness to the instructional efforts of their faculty. However, it was noted that faculty availability or the difficulty of a workforce program to locate qualified faculty could, to some degree, hamper that program’s effectiveness.

Compliant Workforce Chair 9 said,

> There’s nothing worse than having a lousy faculty under you - because you spend most of your time solving their problems instead of you know

> taking care of the day to day operations of the department. But when you have full-time faculty, and get buy-in from them; productivity and success will follow. For a department chair to succeed, he/she is only as good as their faculty!

Compliant Workforce Chair 9 echoed,

> For my program to succeed, it doesn't have a whole lot to do with me as a chair - it really has to do with the faculty that I have working for me. Because they're the ones that are doing the recruiting, they're the ones doing the extra tutoring; the one who provided the extra help to see that we have the placements, and that we have the student success.

It is important to note that near the conclusion of Focus Group One's discussion, the researcher asked each member of the group to name one factor that has contributed most to his/her program's level of compliance and one factor that has been the most debilitating to his/her program's level of compliance. Eight of the ten chairpersons agreed that their faculty was the most beneficial factor to their program being compliant. Compliant Workforce Chair 6 said, "The most positive thing in the department would be the faculty and the most debilitating thing would be my budget."

**Perceptions of Compliant Adjunct Faculty**

Focus Group One provided rich insight into compliant workforce chairpersons' perceptions of the instructional abilities and motives of adjunct faculty. The findings regarding the employment of adjunct faculty were not only less favorable than the employment full-time faculty, but the employment of adjunct faculty was correlated with program non-compliance. The researcher noted that the compliant chairpersons implied that adjunct faculty caused their programs to be less effective because they [the adjuncts] were less committed to both the college and to the workforce programs themselves.

These compliant chairpersons listed several reasons why adjunct faculty performance was less acceptable than that of full-time faculty. The reasons ranged from adjunct faculty not counseling students to adjuncts not being involved in recruitment activities. Compliant Workforce Chair 3's quote summarizes the collective views of compliant chairs regarding the noncommittal approach of most adjunct faculty:

> I feel sorry for programs that have inadequate faculty. Particularly, if you have to depend on a lot of [workforce] adjunct faculty - that even makes it worse. They [adjunct faculty] are not really invested into the system. You know the only thing they [adjuncts] concentrate on is teaching their load and getting their check so they can pay their note on their bass boat.

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

### Questionnaire Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research Question One asked, "What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?"

Table 23

**Non-Compliant Chairperson Gender, Age, and Highest Education**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| | Male | 9 | 69.23% |
| | Female | 4 | 30.77% |
| | **Total Responses** | 13 | 100% |
| **Age** | | | |
| | 30 - 34 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | 35 - 39 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | 40 - 44 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | 45 - 49 | 2 | 18.18% |
| | 50 - 54 | 2 | 18.18% |
| | 55 - 59 | 4 | 36.36% |
| | 60 - 64 | 2 | 18.18% |
| | 65 - 69 | 1 | 9.09% |
| | **Total Responses** | 11 | 100.00% |
| **Highest Level of Education** | | | |
| | Certificate | 1 | 7.69% |
| | Assoc Degree | 1 | 7.69% |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Master's Degree | 6 | 46.15% |
| | Doctoral Degree | 5 | 38.46% |
| | **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Gender**

Unlike their compliant counterparts, the non-compliant group of workforce chairpersons (as represented in Table 23) had a high percentage of males. This cohort had a more than two-to-one male/female ratio: nine (69.23%) were males and four (30.77%) were females.

**Age**

Most non-compliant chairs ranged between 55-59 years of age. In describing their frequency distribution of age, two (18.18%) were between the ages of 45-49, two (18.18%) were between the ages of 50-54, 4 (36.36%) were between the ages of 55-59, two (18.18%) were between the ages 60-64, and one (9.09%) was between the ages of 65-69.

**Highest Level of Education**

Table 23 indicates that one (7.69%) of the non-compliant workforce chair's highest level of education is a certificate. This was an interesting finding given that the minimum state and institutional requirement to teach workforce courses is an associate degree and 36 months of industrial experience. Nonetheless, the majority (84.61%) of non-compliant chairpersons noted that they had post-graduate degrees as their highest level of educational attainment.

Table 24

**Non-Compliant Workforce Chairperson's Years of Industrial Experience**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Years of [Actual] Indstrl Exp** | | |
| 5-6 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 7-8 Years | 1 | 7.69% |
| 9-10 Years | 3 | 23.08% |
| 11-12 Years | 2 | 15.38% |
| 13-14 Years | 1 | 7.69% |
| 15-16 Years | 1 | 7.69% |
| 17-18 Years | 1 | 7.69% |
| 19-20 Years | 1 | 7.69% |
| More than 20 Years | 3 | 23.53% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Years of Industrial Experience**

In terms of experience, the researcher is unclear if the non-compliant chairpersons used their HCCS externship experience when calculating their years of actual industrial experience. Nonetheless, Table 24 indicates that most non-compliant workforce chairs had 9–10 or 20-plus years of industrial experience. However, for non-compliant chairpersons, their industrial experience level dropped significantly after the twelfth year. As illustrated, only one (7.69%) had 13-14 years experience, one (7.69%) had 15-16 years experience, and one chairperson (7.69%) had 17-18 years experience. As previously discussed, greater industrial experience normally correlates with more industrial affiliations, which can be correlated with increased program compliance.

Table 25

**Non-Compliant Chairperson's Years of Supervising Workforce Programs**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Yr(s) Supervising WF Prgrms** | | |
| Less than One Year | 0 | 0.00% |
| 1-2 Years | 1 | 6.25% |
| 3-4 Years | 3 | 18.75% |
| 5-6 Years | 4 | 30.77% |
| 7-8 Years | 2 | 15.38% |
| 9-10 Years | 1 | 6.25% |
| 11-12 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 13-14 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 15-19 Years | 3 | 18.75% |
| More than 20 Years | 3 | 18.75% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Years Supervising Workforce Program**

Most non-compliant chairpersons (7 of 13 or 53.9%) had six years or less of experience in supervising workforce programs. When considering HCCS' chair selection policy, these data suggest that most chairs either were new to the position or had been recently reelected for their first term. Table 25 also indicates that one (6.25%) chair was newly appointed—reporting only 1-2 years of chair experience. Conversely, four (30.77%) non-compliant chairpersons reported 5-6 years of experience, and three (18.75%) indicated more than 20 years of experience supervising workforce programs. This table does not suggest that the chair's experience of supervising workforce programs occurred all at HCCS.

Table 26

**Years of Service – Non-Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Year(s) Served as a HCC Chairperson** | | |
| Less than One Year | 0 | 0.00% |
| 1-2 Years | 3 | 25.00% |
| 3-4 Years | 1 | 8.33% |
| 5-6 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 7-8 Years | 1 | 7.14% |
| 9-10 Years | 3 | 25.00% |
| 11-12 Years | 0 | 0.00% |
| 13-14 Years | 1 | 8.33% |
| 15-19 Years | 2 | 16.67% |
| More than 20 Years | 1 | 8.33% |
| **Total Responses** | 12 | 100.00% |

**Year(s) Served as a HCC Chairperson**

Table 26 does not indicate whether a chairperson was compliant or non-compliant for his/her complete HCCS tenure. When taking into account HCCS' chair selection procedures, a large segment (33.33%) of non-compliant chairs have served less than two terms. As illustrated, three (25.00%) non-compliant chairs served only 1-2 years, and one (8.33%) chair served only 3-4 years. This lack of experience could be a contributing factor as to why this group was rated as non-compliant.

Table 27

**Number of Faculty Supervised by Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Faculty Supervised** | | |
| 1-2 | 2 | 16.67% |
| 3-5 | 5 | 41.67% |
| 6 - 10 | 5 | 41.66% |
| 11-15 | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 12 | 100.00% |

**Full-time Faculty Supervised**

In comparison, nearly two-thirds (63.18%) of the compliant chairs supervised only 1-2 faculty members. However, over 80% of non-compliant workforce chairs supervised significantly more faculty. The majority of non-compliant supervised 3-10 faculty members.

Table 26 also indicates that five (41.67%) non-compliant workforce chairs reported that they supervised between 3-5 faculty members, and five (41.66%) reported they supervised between 6-10 faculty members. In some measure, these findings suggest that non-compliant chairpersons have heavier faculty supervision loads than compliant chairpersons. This could be a contributing factor to their current state of non-compliancy. Though this may be a sound argument, this does not fully take into account or explain why some non-compliant chairpersons also supervised compliant programs.

Table 28

**Number of Adjunct Faculty Supervised by Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct Faculty Supervised** | | |
| 1-3 | 4 | 33.33% |
| 4-8 | 2 | 16.67% |
| 9- 13 | 2 | 16.67% |
| 14-18 | 2 | 16.67% |
| 19 or More | 2 | 16.67% |
| **Total Responses** | 12 | 100.00% |

**Adjunct Faculty Supervised**

As with most community colleges, HCCS employs more adjuncts than full-time faculty for instructional purposes. However, four (33.33%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons had relatively light adjunct faculty supervision loads—supervising only 1–3 adjunct faculty members. By comparison, Table 28 suggests that there were less non-compliant chairpersons (33.34%) than compliant workforce chairpersons (50.00%) who supervised between 4-13 adjunct faculty members.

The remaining two chairpersons (16.67%) supervised 14-18 adjunct faculty members, and another two chairs (16.67%) indicated supervising more than 19 adjunct faculty members. These findings were based upon the chairperson possibly supervising multiple workforce programs.

Table 29

**Number of Staff Supervised by Non-Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Staff Supervised [Non-Faculty]** | | |
| 1 - 2 | 6 | 54.55% |
| 3 - 5 | 4 | 36.39% |
| 6 - 10 | 1 | 9.09% |
| 11 - 15 | 0 | 0.00% |
| More than 16 staff members | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 11 | 100.00% |

**Staff Supervised [Non-Faculty]**

Table 29 indicates an interesting finding. Since over one-third (approx. 37%) of both HCCS compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons supervised multiple programs, Table 29 could support the chairpersons' claims of having excess "paperwork" to complete. Further, Table 29 suggestion that the low numbers of support staff could signal that there is a lack of administrative support for the non-compliant workforce chairpersons. Conversely, six non-compliant (54.55%) workforce program chairpersons reported supervising only 1–2 non-faculty staff, four program chairpersons (36.39%) indicated supervising 3-5 non-faculty staff, and one chairperson (9.09%) indicated supervising 6-10 non-faculty staff.

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

### Focus Group Findings – Group One [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research Question One asked, "What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, number of faculty supervised, and administrative background, etc.) of HCCS' workforce chairpersons and how do these factors correlate with their [compliant or non-compliant] program rating?" In asking this question, the researcher sought to elicit non-compliant workforce chairpersons' perception regarding their industrial experience, administrative insights, and their longevity as program chairpersons – and correlate these factors with their [unacceptable] program rating.

During discussion of this research question with the non-compliant workforce chairpersons, the conversation covered a vast array of themes. None seem more problematic than the issue surrounding the need of non-compliant chairpersons' inability to track students that have completed their programs. As part of the THECB performance criteria, workforce programs must have a minimum 15 completers in a three-year period and a 90% placement rate.

**Perceptions on Tracking Student Completers**

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 3 stated, “As a department chair, you don’t have time to track all those students. But I’m suppose to do that and the 87 other things that the job requires!” Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 9 said,

> Keeping track of graduates is very difficult. Explain to me if tracking students is so important in terms of the coordinating board, why don’t the colleges place more emphasis on it and give us some help. Particularly, if this is the only way you can determine your program’s effectiveness.

The researcher asked the question, “So what’s the solution?” Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 2 answered, “What’s the solution! The solution is to have somebody else who is a professional to help us track these students.” Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 7 affirmed, “Amen!” Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 5 cynically suggested,

> I can hand this [the task of tracking completers] to a work-study student and basically get it done. However, I can’t necessarily expect that my instructors are going to track everybody all over the planet. I got a graduate that moved to Denver Colorado - now I have to be able to track him… I don’t even know if they [THECB] will let me count him or not. My problem is he’s not out of work - it’s he [the student] is not in the state

of Texas; he is in Colorado. I do know where he is working; maybe I can get hold of him, or maybe I can't!

In an attempt to draw a firm comparison between groups, the researcher said,

> Okay, I do understand your dilemma. But for purposes of the study, I need to play devil's advocate here! You're all non-compliant chairs – how is your situation regarding tracking students much different [per say] from that of compliant workforce chairs? How do they track students; what's the difference between the two groups?

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 3 answered,

> The difference between us is whether your students have to move or not. This issue deals with mobility. Not very many folks [students] can just say hey (you know), I think I want to go to Florida and pick up and move. But if you're a _____ tech and have the skills and the tools, then you can go everywhere in the world and work!

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 6 introduced two unique variations to the issue of tracking student completers. Non-Compliant Chair 6 expanded the discussion to his/her students traveling not only nationally but also internationally. Further, Non-Compliant Chair 6 correlated program size with the importance of student tracking to ensure program compliance. In that, smaller

programs faced more difficulty in being compliant than larger ones. In fact, in smaller programs a single completer (in terms of percentage points) could make the difference between being compliant and non-compliant. Non-Compliant Chair 6 rationalized,

> It is a big difference between if a student is unemployed or they're gone [cannot be located] as it relates to the 90% rule. If I can account for 13 of my 14 graduates, then I'm okay. But let's make it twelve, so don't let me have two guys I can't find - then I'm out of compliance no matter what I have done in the past.

## Research Question Two

### Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research Question Two asked, "Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?"

Table 30

**Professional Development Requirement of Compliant Departments**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Faculty Professional Development** | | |
| Required to Attended | 13 | 68.42% |
| Not Required | 6 | 31.58% |
| **Possible Responses** | 19 | 100.00% |

**Professional Development Attended**

Over two-thirds of compliant workforce chairpersons required their faculty to attend professional development activities in 2004. However, Table 30 indicates that six compliant chairpersons (31.58%) did not their faculty to attend professional activities—despite literature suggesting a positive correlation between professional devolvement and workforce program performance.

Table 31

**Professional Development Patterns of Compliant Departments**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **How often do you provide faculty teaching, instructional, or classroom training?** | Number of Respondents | Response Ratio |
| Training Not Provided | 2 | 11.78% |
| As needed W/New Equipment | 1 | 5.89% |
| Monthly | 0 | 0.00% |
| Quarterly | 5 | 29.45% |
| Semi-Annually | 1 | 5.89% |
| Annually | 8 | 47.12% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **Are faculty compensated for attending professional development activities?** | | |
| No | 12 | 75.00% |
| Yes | 4 | 25.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 16 | 100.00% |

**Frequency of Faculty Training**

Table 31 addresses how frequently compliant workforce chairpersons provided faculty teaching, instructional, or classroom training. It appeared that the majority of compliant workforce program chairpersons (47.12%) provided this type of training annually.

Amazingly, Table 31 also indicates that two (11.78%) compliant workforce chairpersons provided no faculty teaching, instructional, or classroom training at all. However, one (5.89%) compliant chairperson did provide training with the acquisition of new equipment.

In both cases—the faculty training not being provided or faculty training being provided only with the addition of new laboratory equipment - these compliant chairpersons may be stifling their program growth; particularly, since it may be years before most workforce programs will have significant capital outlays to purchase new laboratory equipment.

**Compensation for Professional Development**

Table 31 presents a frequency of distribution for compliant workforce chairpersons who either did or did not compensate their faculty for participation in professional development activities. Of those responding, the largest number of compliant chairpersons—12 (75.00%)—indicates that they did not compensate faculty for attending professional development activities.

However, four (25.00%) compliant workforce chairpersons indicated that they did compensate their faculty for attending professional development activities. One example of faculty receiving compensation for professional development would be faculty who participates in HCCS' Faculty Externship Program.

Table 32

**Advertising/Marketing Strategies Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **How is the program advertise/marketed (Choose all that apply)?** | 17 Total | = 100.00% |
| No, I don't advertise | 0 | 0.00% |
| Brochures, Handouts, Flyers | 17 | 100.00% |
| Word of Mouth, Internet, Email, Faxes | 1 | 5.88% |
| Visit High Schools | 12 | 70.59% |
| Student Exhibits | 1 | 5.88% |
| Participation in Community Activities | 13 | 76.47% |
| Area Newspapers | 8 | 47.06% |
| **The Top-4 advertising/marketing methods that have produced an increase in student enrollment** | 17 Total | = 100.00% |
| Visit High Schools | 17 | 100.00% |
| Telephone | 12 | 70.56% |
| Area Newspapers | 4 | 23.52% |
| Brochures, Handouts, Flyers | 1 | 5.88% |

**Program Advertising/Marketing**

Table 32 indicated the three most popular ways that the vast majority of compliant workforce program chairpersons advertise/market their programs. Most popular were (1) brochures, handouts, and flyers, (2) through participating in community activities, and (3) visiting area high schools. Of the 17 compliant

chairpersons surveyed, all (100.00%) used brochures, handouts, and flyers, one (5.88%) chair revealed he/she used WOM, Internet, email, and faxes, 12 (70.59%) reported that they marketed at high schools. However, only one (5.88%) compliant chairperson advertised through student exhibits; while, 13 (76.47%) revealed that they market through their participation in community activities. Interestingly, less than half, eight (47.06%), indicated that they advertised in area newspapers.

**The Top Four Advertising/Marketing Methods**

Included in Table 32 is a frequency distribution analysis for the Top four advertising/marketing methods that have been employed by compliant workforce chairs that have resulted in an increase in student enrollment. Among all 17 respondents (100% of the compliant workforce chairs), the advertising/marketing methods that resulted in the greatest enrollment increases were visits to area high schools, followed by calling potential students. Twelve (70.56%) compliant program chairs indicated that telephone calls were an effective way to increase student enrollment. As no surprise, only one (5.88%) compliant workforce chair indicated that using [low-tech] brochures, handouts, and flyers was one of his/her top four ways of increasing student enrollment.

Table 33

**Enrollment Planning by Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Planning For Future Courses** | | |
| Chairperson's Decision | 1 | 6.25% |
| Faculty Input Only | 0 | 0.00% |
| Both Student and Faculty Input | 8 | 50.00% |
| Feedback from Advisory Committee | 5 | 31.25% |
| Based on Institutional Enrollment Data | 0 | 0.00% |
| Employment Trends/Jobs Market | 2 | 12.50% |
| **Total Responses** | 16 | 100.00% |

**Planning for Future Courses**

Most for-credit workforce programs have an inventory of courses. These classes can influence enrollment because of their sheer popularity among students or because the classes are a required part of a program credential. Table 33 sought to clarify the method used by compliant program chairs for planning courses. Only one (6.25%) compliant program chairperson indicated that enrollment management was solely his/her decision, eight (50.00%) chairs indicated that both student and faculty input was solicited, five (31.25%) chairs indicated that they sought Advisory Committee feedback before planning courses, and two (12.50%) took a futuristic approach and indicated that planning future courses were based on employment trends.

Table 34

**Compliant Workforce Program Student Demographics**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Approximately, what percentage of students return to enroll in additional courses?** | | |
| Less than 25% | 1 | 5.88% |
| About 25 % | 2 | 11.76% |
| About 50% | 7 | 41.18% |
| About 75% | 7 | 41.18% |
| About 100% | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **What is the typical age of the students enrolled in your program(s)?** | | |
| 18 -29 | 11 | 64.71% |
| 30 - 40 | 6 | 35.29% |
| 41 - 50 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 51 - 60 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Over | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **The typical educational background of students who enter the program** | | |
| GED or High School Diploma | 5 | 29.41% |
| Some College Hours | 11 | 64.71% |
| Assoc Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| BS Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other | 1 | 5.88% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Student Retention**

Because of business/industry's need for skilled employees and their general reluctance to wait for students to complete their programs, it is not uncommon in some programs to have a student attrition rate of 50%. However, Table 34 should be somewhat disturbing in that one (5.88%) chairperson indicated that less than 25 percent of students re-enroll to take additional courses. Equally disturbing is the fact that only two (11.76%) compliant chairpersons indicated that about 25% of their students re-enroll in additional courses. This level of student attrition could explain why some "compliant" programs were only marginally so in terms of completers.

**Student and Students' Age and Educational Background**

The majority of compliant chairs (64.71%) reported their students were between the ages of 18-29. This finding suggests that specialized recruitment strategies should be directed or intensified towards both area high schools and younger students. Furthermore, 11 (64.71%) compliant chairpersons also reported the typical educational background of their students consisted of having some college hours. This would also indicate that some of the younger students had already acquired some college hours [possibly] through tech-prep or dual credit opportunities at their respective high schools. Some of the 18-29 year old students could have previously attended a community college and were not successful.

Table 35

**Compliant Chairpersons' Forecasting of Student Enrollment**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Why do most students enroll in your program(s)?** | | |
| Skill(s) for First Job | 8 | 47.06% |
| Upgrade Job Skills | 4 | 23.53% |
| Change Careers | 5 | 29.41% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **Forecast program growth for the next 5 years** | | |
| Program will Decline | 0 | 0.00% |
| Program will Remain at the Same Level | 3 | 17.65% |
| Moderate Program Growth | 12 | 70.59% |
| Rapid Program Growth | 2 | 11.76% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Enrollment Forecasting and Enrollment Motives**

HCCS has access to Community College Strategic Planning software (CCSP). CCSP software allows community colleges to tap into current economic and employment data. The software lists area businesses' phone numbers, company credit ratings, owner's name, addresses, and, most importantly, the number of employees. Why is this important, and how is it related to forecasting student enrollment? Through better understanding of potential employment needs of their service area, compliant workforce chairpersons and their deans should be

able to determine the usefulness of their programs. In the opinions of the compliant chairs, three (17.65%) indicated that their program will remain at the same level, 12 (70.59%) anticipated moderate program growth, and two (11.76%) forecasted rapid program growth for the next five years. According to simple logic, if there are a minimum number of potential employers in the college's service area, this could alter students' ability to acquire their first job, upgrade present job skills, or change careers.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

### Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research question two asked, "Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?" In asking question two, the researcher sought to move away from the compliant workforce chairpersons' industrial and administrative backgrounds and address their perceptions of program issues such as: professional development, advertising/marketing strategies, etc., and correlate these factors with their [acceptable] program ratings.

In seeking to understand these factors, the researcher extracted a series of themes from the rich focus group discussion that ensued. Below are a few direct quotes that will give the reader a sense of the compliant workforce chairpersons' views and opinions. Of the varied topics discussed, program advertising/market tended to dominate the conversation.

**Perceptions of Program Advertising/Marketing**

Compliant Workforce Chair 8 suggested that having an effective program required aggressive marketing. In fact, he/she said: “If I didn’t promote the program, it wouldn’t exist!” Compliant workforce chair 4 agreed but implied that in order to have compliant programs he/she relied on “word-of-mouth” advertising, meaning, it was important to offer students quality instruction so that the students themselves would spread the “word.” In fact, Compliant Workforce Chair 4 continued, “Speaking of word of mouth, I have found in marketing, the best marketing tool is a satisfied student!”

Despite the fact that Focus Group One was comprised of chairpersons who supervised compliant programs, many expressed an institutional need for a concerted effort, by their respective college or the system, for an advertising/marketing strategy that was strictly designed for workforce programs. It was fascinating because the compliant workforce chairs had correlated advertising/marketing together with recruitment as factors that influenced their level of program effectiveness. Focus Group One [compliant chairpersons] expressed several constraints that hampered their ability to market their programs (i.e. lack of time, expertise, and resources):

Compliant Workforce Chair 3 said, “Everybody gets frustrated with this; we don’t spend enough our time promoting our program. We don’t spend our time

working with faculty; we don't spend our time building our programs because of the mountains of paperwork that we are asked to do." Compliant Workforce Chair 5 stated, "I should be out there sitting in _____ finance and _____ legal. I should be sitting in a _____ office and should be sitting in a _____ office talking with them about their training/educational needs."

Additionally, as per the compliant chairpersons, the researcher was informed that there may be some institutionalized policies restricting them from advertising/marketing their own programs. Furthermore, as per the compliant chairs, there appeared to an absence of an organized marketing strategy [system-wide] for workforce programs. In addition, workforce program chairpersons stated there were no discretionary funds in the program's budget available for individual program marketing initiatives. The researcher asked the questions, "Do any of you guys have line items set up in your program budget for advertising? Do you do anything at the departmental or program level to market your program? And if so, what do you do?"

Compliant Workforce Chair 2 noted, "No, they took all that away." Compliant Workforce Chairperson 7 stated, "No, we are not allowed to do that." Compliant workforce chairperson 2 said:

> Yah, I don't have a problem with my budget, I have a problem with my advertising, my budget is fine because I'm piggy backed on to a _____

program and _____ so our cost for our program is extremely low. We have low program cost and high student success. With our low program cost and everything that's already here, it just icing on the cake. However, we do need to advertise. I could have so may more students if I could just run an ad in the _____ and _____magazine once a month!

## Research Question Two

### Questionnaire Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research Question Two asked, "Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?"

Table 36

**Professional Development Requirements of Non-Compliant Departments**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Faculty Professional Development** | | |
| Required | 12 | 92.31% |
| Not Required | 1 | 7.69% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Professional Development Attended**

Table 36 reveals non-compliant faculty was more likely to attend professional development activities than faculty from compliant programs that had a 68.42% attendance rate. Research suggested a positive correlation between professional development and program performance.

Table 37

**Professional Development Patterns of Non-Compliant Departments**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **How often do you provide faculty teaching, instructional, or classroom training?** | Number of Respondents | Response Ratio |
| Training Not Provided | 2 | 15.38% |
| As needed W/New Equipment | 0 | 0.00% |
| Monthly | 0 | 0.00% |
| Quarterly | 4 | 30.77% |
| Per Semester | 7 | 53.85% |
| Annually | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |
| **Are faculty compensated for attending professional development activities?** | | |
| No | 6 | 46.15% |
| Yes | 7 | 53.85% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Frequency of Faculty Training**

Table 37 addressed the frequency of distribution of non-compliant workforce chairpersons that provided training for their faculty. It appeared that 7 (53.85%) non-compliant workforce program chairpersons provided faculty training at least once a semester. Through researcher oversight, the non-compliant chairpersons' survey questionnaires were not originally given the selection "per semester". However, the non-compliant chairpersons listed their per semester choices under the "view other responses" on the web-based questionnaire.

Nonetheless, 4 (30.77%) non-compliant chairpersons reported that they provided training quarterly and 2 (15.38%) non-compliant chairpersons did not provide any faculty training activities. To not provide faculty with training, this could be a critical mistake on the behalf of the non-compliant workforce chairpersons, against HCCS policy, and could be a contributing factor to these programs being non-compliant.

**Compensation for Professional Development**

The analysis of data presents a frequency of distribution of non-compliant workforce chairs who either did or did not compensate their faculty for their participation in professional development activities appeared to be [nearly] equally split. Findings revealed that 6 (46.15%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons did not compensate faculty for attending professional development activities and 7 (53.85%) non-compliant chairpersons did compensate their faculty.

Some examples of faculty receiving compensation for professional development would be those faculty who participate in HCCS' sabbatical leave program and the Faculty Externship Program.

Table 38

**Advertising/Marketing Strategies of Non-Compliant Workforce Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **How is the program advertise/marketed (Choose all that apply)?** | 13 | = 100.00% |
| No, I don't advertise | 0 | 0.00% |
| Brochures, Handouts, Flyers | 13 | 100.00% |
| Word of Mouth, Internet, Email, Faxes | 3 | 23.00% |
| Visit High Schools | 11 | 84.62% |
| Student Exhibits | 0 | 0.00% |
| Participation in Community Activities | 12 | 92.31% |
| Area Newspapers | 7 | 53.85% |
| **Total Responses** | | |
| **The Top-4 advertising methods that have produced an increase in student enrollment** | | |
| Brochures, Handouts, Flyers | 11 | 100.00% |
| Visit High Schools | 11 | 100.00% |
| Telephone, | 7 | 63.63% |
| Word of Mouth (WOM) | 3 | 27.27% |
| **Total Responses** | 11 | |

**Program Advertising/Marketing**

Table 38 indicates the four most popular ways that the vast majority of non-compliant workforce program chairpersons' advertise/market their programs. Most popular were (1) brochures, handouts, and flyers, (2) participating in

community activities, (3) visiting area high schools, and (4) advertising in area/local newspapers. Of the 13 non-complainant workforce chairpersons surveyed, all (100.00%) used brochures, handouts, and flyers, three (5.88%) used WOM, Internet, email, and faxes. Conversely, 11 (84.62%) non-compliant chairpersons reported that they marketed their workforce programs at local high schools. Interestingly, slightly more than half, eight (53.85%), of the non-compliant chairpersons indicated that they advertised in area newspapers as compared to less than half of the compliant program chairpersons.

**The Top Four Advertising/Marketing Methods**

Table 38 also details the top four advertising/marketing methods that have resulted in an increase in student enrollment for non-compliant workforce chairpersons. Among the 11 respondents (100% of the non-compliant workforce chairs), the advertising/marketing methods that resulted in the greatest enrollment increases were brochures, handouts, and flyers, followed by visits to area high schools and calling potential students. Conversely, seven (63.63%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated that telephone calls were an effective way to increase student enrollment.

Table 39

**Enrollment Planning by Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Chairperson's method of planning future courses** | | |
| Chairperson's Decision | 0 | 0.00% |
| Faculty Input Only | 0 | 0.00% |
| Both Student and Faculty Input | 4 | 36.36% |
| Feedback from Advisory Committee | 3 | 27.27% |
| Based on Institutional Enrollment Data | 0 | 0.00% |
| Employment Trends/Jobs Market | 4 | 36.36% |
| **Total Responses** | 11 | 100.00% |

**Planning for Future Courses**

Most for-credit workforce programs have a large inventory of courses to offer students. Choosing the "right ones" can greatly influence enrollment because of their sheer popularity among students or because the classes are part of a degree requirement. Table 39 sought to determine the method used by non-compliant workforce chairpersons for planning their programs' course offerings. The findings were equally split between Student/Faculty Input and Employment Trends; with each scoring 36.36%. The remaining 3 (27.27%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated that they sought Advisory Committee feedback before planning course offerings.

Table 40

**Non-Compliant Workforce Program Student Demographics**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Approximately, what percentage of students return to enroll in additional courses?** | | |
| Less than 25% | 3 | 23.08% |
| About 25 % | 0 | 0.00% |
| About 50% | 2 | 15.38% |
| About 75% | 7 | 53.85% |
| About 100% | 1 | 7.69% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |
| **What is the typical age of the students enrolled in your program(s)?** | | |
| 18 -29 | 6 | 46.15% |
| 30 - 40 | 7 | 53.85% |
| 41 - 50 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 51 - 60 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Over | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |
| **The typical educational background of students who enter the program** | | |
| GED or High School Diploma | 8 | 61.54% |
| Some College Hours | 5 | 38.46% |
| Assoc Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| BS Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Student Retention**

Because of business/industry's need for skilled employees and their general reluctance to wait for students to complete their programs, it is common in some workforce programs to have an amplified student attrition rate. However, Table 40 should be somewhat disturbing in that three (23.08%) non-compliant chairpersons indicated that only 25 percent or less of their students returned to re-enroll in additional courses. On the positive side, a combined total of eight (61.54%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons did note that 75–100% of their students re-enroll in additional courses.

**Students' Age and Educational Backgrounds**

The majority of non-compliant workforce chairpersons (53.85%) reported their students were between the ages of 30-40 years old. This finding was surprising when compared to the fact that the majority of compliant workforce chairpersons reported that the majority of their students ranged between the ages of 18-29. Despite being older, most students entering non-compliant programs also entered at a lower educational level than those students entering compliant programs. No non-compliant workforce chairpersons reported that their students' educational background included "some college hours." This would signal that older students who have primarily attained a GED or high school diploma occupy these programs.

Table 41

**Non-Compliant Chairpersons' Forecasting of Student Enrollment**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Why do most students enroll in your program(s)?** | | |
| Skill(s) for First Job | 5 | 41.67% |
| Upgrade Job Skills | 2 | 16.67% |
| Change Careers | 5 | 41.67% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 12 | 100.00% |
| **Forecast program growth for the next 5 years** | | |
| Program will Decline | 0 | 0.00% |
| Program will Remain at the Same Level | 2 | 15.38% |
| Moderate Program Growth | 10 | 76.92% |
| Rapid Program Growth | 1 | 7.69% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Enrollment Forecasting and Enrollment Motives**

HCCS has access to Community College Strategic Planning software (CCSP). CCSP software program allows community colleges to tap into current economic and employment data. The software lists area businesses' phone numbers, company credit ratings, owner's name, addresses, and, most importantly, their number of employees. Why is this important, and how is it related to forecasting student enrollment? By better understanding the potential employment needs of their service area, non-compliant workforce chairs and their

deans should be able determine the usefulness of their programs. In the opinions of the non-compliant chairs, two (15.38%) indicated that their programs will remain at the same growth level for the next five years, 10 (76.92%) anticipated moderate program growth, and two (7.69%) forecasted rapid program growth for the next five years. According to simple logic, if there are only a minimum number of potential employers in the college's service area, this could alter a student's ability to acquire his/her first job, upgrade present job skills, or change career paths.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

### Focus Group Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research question two asked, "Are compliant workforce programs more likely to be involved with departmental effectiveness factors (e.g., professional development, marketing, and enrollment management activities) than non-compliant workforce programs? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most influential to their program rating?" In asking question two, the researcher sought to move away from the non-compliant workforce chairpersons' industrial and administrative backgrounds, to address their perceptions of program issues such as: professional development, advertising/marketing strategies, etc., and correlate these factors with their [unacceptable] program rating.

Below are direct quotes that will help the reader grasp the tone of the non-compliant focus group discussion as well as what factors the non-compliant chairpersons identified that influenced program effectiveness. Conversely, when asked directly by the researcher what has helped most or hindered workforce program effectiveness, one non-compliant chairperson took a "don't blame me" slant, implying that his/her program was just fine before the THECB increased its workforce performance standards.

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 8 said,

> There isn't anything as far as my program's concerned that we can talk about... Everything we've to talk about is arbitrarily decided. It all depends on where the compliancy line is! The line has been at 85% for 20 years, and we had 85% job placement for 20 years - so we're fine. But then about three years ago, they [THECB] said let us make it [the performance standard] 90%. That's why we're not in compliance anymore!

**Perception of Advertising/Marketing**

The advertising and marketing issue seems to be most prevalent among non-compliant chairpersons. Their responses identified the importance and pitfalls associated with not advertising. Below are direct quotes of the non-compliant chairpersons that effectively described their perceptions of marketing/advertising at HCCS:

Non-compliant Workforce Chair 1 said, "Our problem is not getting people. I guess everybody (probably) is always getting students through the door." Non-compliant Workforce Chair 2 referenced the proprietary institutions and how effective their advertising campaigns are at attracting students. Non-compliant Workforce Chair 2 said,

> Those guys are good [the for-profits] and we've got to compete with their advertising. Let's face it; students aren't just going to come to us because we're HCC. Our advertising helps give them [the students] a reason to enroll with us!

Non-compliant Workforce Chair 3 suggested a possible bias against non-compliant programs. Non-compliant Chair 3 said, "I wanted to really talk about these programs that are in the non-compliant state. Are they equally advertised as much as the other programs?" Non-compliant Workforce Chair 9 offered this suggestion, "What is advertising? Lonnie, there is no marketing! [HCCS should] have budgets that support program advertising and marketing!"

The researcher was not certain if the non-compliant workforce chairpersons' reluctance to discuss high-tech advertising methods for marketing their programs was due to a lack of program funding. Rather, when detailing their advertising/marketing strategies, non-compliant workforce chairpersons talked about these low-tech low yield tactics:

Non-compliant Workforce Chair 4 stated he/she preferred, "Alumni or students telling their own personal stories." Non-compliant Workforce Chair 3 preferred using a combination of low-tech marketing approaches. Non-compliant Chair 3 noted,

I am specifically saying a *trade show* in conjunction with *industry* trade shows. With industry trade shows, our students are giving out program flyers and brochures. Instead of me doing my pep talk about my program, my students will do it and probably be more convincing. In other words, students recruiting students can be effective.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

### Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research Question Three asked, "Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most detrimental/influential to their program rating?"

Table 42

**Adequate Budget – Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The extent the chair believes the program's budget is adequate** | | | |
| | Strongly Agree | 1 | 5.88% |
| | Agree | 7 | 41.18% |
| | Disagree | 7 | 41.18% |
| | Strongly Disagree | 2 | 11.76% |
| | **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **Has the program ever received state, federal, and/or private grants** | | | |
| | No | 7 | 41.18% |
| | Yes | 10 | 58.82% |
| | **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Budget Appropriateness**

When taken as a whole, Table 42 does not indicate compliant program chairpersons' dissatisfaction with their workforce budgets. This outcome is somewhat confusing because during their focus group, compliant program chairpersons expressed strong opposition to their respective workforce budgets. Nonetheless, when examined closely, the frequency distribution of Table 42 has (nearly) as many compliant workforce chairpersons who believe their budget are adequate as those who do not. Of those who responded, seven (41.18%) chairpersons agreed that their program's budget was adequate and seven chairs (41.8%) disagreed. Conversely, two compliant chairs (11.76%) *strongly* disagreed that their workforce program's budget was adequate.

**Application for Grants**

For those compliant workforce chairpersons who disagreed with their budget amounts, the researcher sought to determine if their dissatisfaction would correlate with an increase in the number of compliant chairpersons who applied for public or private grants. Interestingly, seven compliant workforce chairpersons (41.18%) never applied for state, federal, and/or private grants. However, 10 compliant workforce chairpersons (58.82%) have applied for grants. The number of compliant chairs who applied for grants do correlate with the percentages of the compliant chairpersons who believed their budgets were inadequate.

Table 43

**The Ability of the Compliant Chairpersons to Secure Grants**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **What percentage of your current program's budget is based on such grants?** | | |
| None | 11 | 64.71% |
| Less than 10% | 5 | 29.41% |
| 10%-20% | 1 | 5.88% |
| 21%-30% | 0 | 0.00% |
| 31%-greater | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Percentage of Grants Support**

According to recent literature, public as well as private organizations such as the National Science Foundation have begun to increase their grant awards to workforce programs. The researcher sought to determine what percentage of compliant workforce chairpersons based their programs' operating budgets on such (i.e. state, federal, and/or private) grants.

Of those responding, 11 (64.71%) of the compliant chairpersons reported that their budgets were not based on such grants, five compliant chairpersons (29.41%) reported that less than 10% of their budgets was based on grants, and one chairperson (5.88%) reported that 10 to 20% of his/her budget was based on such grants.

Table 44

**Compliant Chairpersons' Business/Industrial Affiliations**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Business/Industrial Affiliations** | | |
| None | 3 | 25.00% |
| Chamber of Commerce | 1 | 8.33% |
| VICA | 1 | 8.33% |
| DECA | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other Responses | 7 | 58.33% |
| **Responses Ratio** | 12 | 75.00% |

**Business/Industrial Affiliations**

Industrial affiliations are at the center of workforce program effectiveness. Table 44 provides a frequency distribution of the compliant workforce chairpersons' business/industrial affiliations. Of those responding, one compliant chairperson (8.33%) indicated an affiliation with the Chamber of Commerce, one (8.33%) indicated an affiliation with VICA, and seven chairpersons (58.33%) indicated other affiliations. Other affiliated memberships listed were the APTA, the humane organization, the American Dental Assistance Association, Life Science, law enforcement organizations, and American Institute of CPAs. Given their importance, amazingly, three compliant chairpersons (25.00%) indicated no affiliations with any business or industry.

Table 45

**Compliant Chairpersons' Advisory Committee Involvement**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The average number of times the advisory committee meet per year** | | | |
| 1 - Times | | 0 | 0.00% |
| 2 - Times | | 13 | 76.47% |
| 3 - Times | | 4 | 23.53% |
| 4 - Times | | 0 | 0.00% |
| | **Total Responses** | 17 | 100.00% |

**Advisory Committee Involvement**

According to THECB requirements, advisory committees must meet at least twice a year. Table 45 indicates that 13 compliant workforce chairpersons (76.47%) [the majority] indicated that their advisory committees met twice a year. Of note, four compliant workforce chairpersons (23.53%) indicated their advisory committee met [on average] three times a year.

The researcher is not sure if having an advisory committee meeting three times a year was part of a special program accrediting requirement or if these meetings were held at the request of the chairperson or the advisory committee members. What is known is that increased advisory committee contact and involvement can significantly increase workforce program compliance.

Table 46

**Perceived Support - Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Percentages and Frequencies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The perceived level of workforce program support from the following:** | Unsupportive | Supportive | Exceptional Support | **Totals** |
| The College President | 5.88% (1) | 58.82% (10) | 35.29% (6) | 17 |
| The WF Dean | 5.88% (1) | 29.41% (5) | 64.71% (11) | 17 |
| Your Advisory Committee | 0.00% (0) | 17.65% (3) | 82.35% (14) | 17 |
| Business/Industry Ldrs/Emplyrs | 6.25% (1) | 68.75% (11) | 25.00% (4) | 16 |
| The Community | 12.50% (2) | 68.75% (11) | 18.75% (3) | 16 |
| **Totals** | 6.02% (5) | 48.19% (40) | 45.78% (38) | 83 |

**Perceived Administrative/Community Support**

Table 46 indicates that most compliant workforce chairpersons at HCCS perceived that their college president, workforce dean, advisory committee, business/industrial leaders, and service area communities were supportive. Of the 17 compliant chairpersons who responded, only one compliant chairperson (5.88%) indicated his/her president was unsupportive, and one compliant chairperson (5.88%) indicated his/her workforce dean was unsupportive. Ten compliant chairpersons (58.82%) reported that their program received support from their college president, and six compliant chairpersons (35.29%) indicated that their programs received exceptional support from their president. Of the 17

compliant chairpersons who responded, only one compliant chairpersons (5.88%) indicated his/her workforce dean was unsupportive, five compliant chairpersons (29.41%) indicated that their programs received support from their workforce dean, and 11 compliant chairpersons (64.71%) indicated that their programs received exceptional support from their workforce dean. Of the 17 compliant chairpersons that responded, three chairpersons (17.65%) indicated that their Advisory Committees were supportive, but 14 compliant chairpersons (82.35%) indicated that their workforce programs received exceptional support from their Advisory Committees.

Of the 16 compliant chairpersons who responded, one (6.25%) indicated his/her business/industry leaders/employers were unsupportive, 11 (68.75%) indicated they received support from business/industry leaders/employers, and four (25.00%) indicated they received exceptional support from business/industry leaders/employers. Of the same 16 compliant chairpersons who reported, two (12.50%) indicated their community was unsupportive, 11 (68.75%) indicated they received support from the community, and three (18.75%) indicated they received exceptional support from the community.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

### Focus Group Findings – Group One [Compliant Chairs]

Research question three asked, "Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most detrimental/influential to their program rating?" In asking this question, the researcher first sought to elicit compliant workforce chairpersons' perception of any internal factors (i.e., budgetary disbursements, administrative regulations, workforce policies, etc) as well as external factors (i.e., business affiliations, advisory committee, surrounding service areas, etc.) that might curtail program effectiveness.

During the compliant focus group session, several themes surfaced relating to research question three. Some of these themes were: (1) compliant chairpersons' great appreciation for their advisory committees, (2) a general satisfaction for the level of support received from their workforce deans, and (3) a dislike for program budget amounts. It should be noted that when the researcher analyzed the workforce compliant chairpersons' questionnaires, their responses were somewhat dissimilar. The compliant chairpersons' results revealed that

47.06% thought their budgets were appropriate, while 52.94% of compliant workforce chairpersons disapproved of their budgets.

**Perceptions of the Chairperson Selection Policy**

Of all the topics discussed during Focus Group One, there was no issue more contentious than HCCS' selection policy for workforce program chairs. Almost unanimously, the compliant chairpersons viewed this institutional policy as detrimental and counter-productive to increasing workforce effectiveness because it [in their words] impacts so many other aspects of their jobs. For example, since partnership building is important to workforce effectiveness, it is extremely important that a workforce chairperson have longevity in the position.

Regarding the term limit for program chairpersons, Compliant Workforce Chair 3 asked, "What is the current time - is it three years right?" I think the first two years in the position you're ineffective – you're just learning the ropes." Compliant Workforce Chair 8 agreed, "That's right." Compliant Workforce Chair 6 said, "It [HCCS Chair Selection Policy] wasn't thought out well when they created this policy! Compliant Workforce Chair 10 said,

> When you think about trying to establish a partnership with industry, I think the longer you're a chair—the easier it is because you can interact with more people within the industry and from the community as well. The more relationships you can build. [By staying in the position longer]

> you can influence who's on your advisory committee, what kind of participation you receive, and what kind of support you get from them.

Several of the compliant workforce chairpersons took a more philosophical position towards HCCS' chair selection policy and placed a unique slant on their perceptions of the benefit, logic, and usefulness of the policy. Compliant Workforce Chair 2 took a somewhat comical outlook and said, "The process is kinda like being mayor! You gotta spend your first year just running for the office!" Compliant Workforce Chair 8 voiced,

> I think I'd say about the selection process, as it currently exists, I don't really agree with it. If it were such a wonderful selection process, then we would do the same thing with the Deans, the Presidents, and the Chancellor and switch them out every three years. I mean it's just not an effective way of building administration because the person who's chair this year is going to be or could be answering to his/her subordinate next year.

Taking a more positive and practical approach, Compliant Workforce Chair 5 said,

> Well, there are different perspectives. Sometimes, it could be a breath of fresh air [to change leadership every three years] but I do agree that it

takes several years to really get it all together with WECM, THECB site visits, program reviews, self-assessment studies, progress reports, and knowing everything that one needs to know to be chair.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

### Questionnaire Findings – Group One [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research Question One asked, "Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most detrimental/influential to their program rating?"

Table 47

**Adequate Budget – Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The extent the chair believes the program's budget is adequate** | | | |
| | Agree | 7 | 53.85% |
| | Disagree | 1 | 7.69% |
| | Strongly Disagree | 5 | 38.46% |
| | **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |
| **Has the program ever applied for and received a state, federal, and/or private grants** | | Number of Respondents | Response Ratio |
| | No | 5 | 38.46% |
| | Yes | 8 | 61.54% |
| | **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Adequate Budget**

Taken as a whole, Table 47 does not indicate dissatisfaction with workforce budgets among non-compliant program chairpersons. This outcome is somewhat confusing because a "common" assumption could have been made that the non-compliant chairpersons might blame their programs' non-compliancy on their inadequate budgets – but this was not the case. For example, seven (53.85%) non-compliant program chairpersons agreed that their programs' budgets were adequate. However, one (7.69%) non-compliant program chairperson thought his/her program's budget was inadequate and five (38.46%) non-compliant program chairpersons strongly disagreed with their program's budget amount.

**Applications for Grants**

Since six non-compliant workforce chairpersons disagreed with their budget amounts, the researcher sought to determine if their dissatisfaction would correlate with the number of chairpersons who applied for public or private grants. Table 47 indicates that five (38.46%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons never applied for or received state, federal, and/or private grants. However, eight (61.54%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated that their programs did apply for and received state, federal, and/or private grants.

Table 48

**Grants Secured by Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **What percentage of your current program's budget is based on such grants?** | | |
| None | 7 | 53.85% |
| Less than 10% | 4 | 30.77% |
| 10%-20% | 2 | 15.38% |
| 21%-30% | 0 | 0.00% |
| 31%-greater | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Percentage of Grants Support**

More public and private organizations have begun to take an increased interest in funding postsecondary workforce programs. Given these new financial opportunities, the researcher sought to determine how many HCCS non-compliant workforce chairpersons had based their programs' operating budget on such (i.e. state, federal, and/or private) grants. Of those responding, seven (53.85%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons reported that their budgets were not grant-funded, four (30.77%) reported that their budgets were based on less than 10 percent of such grants, and two (15.38%) reported that their budgets were based on 10 to 20 percent of grant funds.

Table 49

**Business/Industrial Affiliations of Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Business/Industrial Affiliations** | | |
| None | 0 | 0.00% |
| Chamber of Commerce | 1 | 12.50% |
| VICA | 0 | 0.00% |
| DECA | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other Responses | 7 | 87.50% |
| **Responses Ratio** | 8 | 100.00% |

**Business/Industrial Affiliations**

Business and industrial collaboration, partnerships, and affiliations are at the center of workforce program effectiveness. Table 49 provides a frequency distribution of some of the non-compliant workforce chairpersons' business and industrial affiliations. Of the eight non-compliant workforce chairpersons who responded, one (12.50%) indicated a specific affiliation with the Chamber of Commerce, while the remaining seven (87.50%) indicated affiliations such as: Cosmetology Education of America, hospital affiliations, Society of Manufacturing Engineering, Fashion Group International, and Texas Restaurant Association.

Table 50

**Non-Compliant Chairpersons Advisory Involvement**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **The average number of times the advisory committee meet per year** | | |
| 1 - Times | 0 | 0.00% |
| 2 - Times | 7 | 53.85% |
| 3 - Times | 4 | 30.77% |
| 4 - Times | 2 | 15.38% |
| **Total Responses** | 13 | 100.00% |

**Advisory Committee Involvement**

According to THECB requirements, advisory committees must meet at least twice a year. Table 50 indicates that seven (53.85%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons' met with their advisory committee twice a year, four (30.77%) met three times a year, and two (15.38%) met an outstanding four times a year.

The researcher is not sure if holding advisory committee meetings three or four times a year is part of a special accrediting requirement or if these meeting were held at the request of the chairperson/committee. However, the researcher drew parallels between the increased number of times the non-compliant chairpersons were willing to meet with their advisory committee versus the compliant workforce chairpersons who met fewer number of times.

Table 51

**Perceived Support - Non-Compliant Chairpersons**

| Category | Percentages and Frequencies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The perceived level of workforce program support from the following:** | Unsupportive | Supportive | Exceptional Support | **Totals** |
| The College President | 16.67% (2) | 58.33% (7) | 25.00% (3) | 12 |
| The WF Dean | 15.38% (2) | 38.46% (5) | 46.15% (6) | 13 |
| Your Advisory Committee | 0.00% (0) | 53.85% 7) | 46.15% (6) | 13 |
| Business/Industry Ldrs/Emplyrs | 0.00% (0) | 76.92% (10) | 23.08% (3) | 13 |
| The Community | 0.00% (0) | 100.00% (13) | 0.00% (0) | 13 |
| **Totals** | 6.25% (4) | 65.63% (42) | 23.13% (18) | 64 |

**Perceived Support**

Table 51 indicates that most non-compliant workforce chairpersons at HCCS perceived that their college president, workforce dean, advisory committee, business/industrial leaders, and their service area communities were generally supportive. However, two (16.67%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated their president was unsupportive, and two (15.38%) indicated their workforce dean was unsupportive. Therefore, seven (58.33%) of the 12 non-compliant chairpersons reported their programs received support from their president, and three (25.00%) non-compliant chairpersons indicated that they received exceptional support from their president.

Of the 13 who responded, two (15.38%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated their dean was unsupportive, five (38.46%) indicated there was support from the dean, and six (46.15%) indicated that they received exceptional support from their dean. Furthermore, seven (53.85%) non-compliant workforce chairpersons indicated that their program received support from their advisory committee, and six (46.15%) indicated this support was exceptional.

Of the 13 who responded, 10 (76.92%) non-compliant chairpersons indicated that their program received support from business/industry leaders/employers, and three (23.08%) indicated the support from business/industry leaders/employers was exceptional.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

### Focus Group Findings – Group Two [Non-Compliant Chairs]

Research question three asked, "Are compliant workforce chairpersons more likely to be satisfied with internal (e.g., budget amounts, college/system support, and institutionalized policies) and external (e.g., business affiliations, advisory committees, and service area support) effectiveness factors than non-compliant workforce chairpersons? Which of these effectiveness factors do workforce chairpersons perceive as being most detrimental/influential to their program rating?"

In asking this question, the researcher first sought to elicit non-compliant workforce chairpersons' perception of any internal factors (e.g., budgetary disbursements, administrative regulations, workforce policies, etc.) or external factors (i.e., business affiliations, advisory committee, surrounding service areas, etc.) that might curtail program effectiveness.

**Perceptions of Non-Compliant Advisory Committees Involvement**

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 6 noted an excellent example of advisory committee involvement and support:

> As far as that goes, our advisory committee is great. For advertising/marketing purposes, one of our advisory committee members

> is putting together a Power Point presentation. Members of our advisory committee will take that Power Point to the Rotary Club and to different other organizations. This is their way of helping us promote all three disciplines in our department, including the two that are out of compliance.

**Perceptions of Community Support**

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 7 described a strong connection between the community and his/her program. Most members' views of their service areas in Focus Group Two [non-compliant] were aligned with those of Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 7: "Our service area is a very positive thing for the program. We have a strong community presence and the community gives us a lot of positive feed back for the program."

In comparing the results from Focus Group Two [non-compliant] to the results from the survey questionnaire group of non-compliant workforce chairpersons, the researcher found that non-compliant workforce chairpersons' sentiments toward external factors such as advisory committees and community support were generally very positive. However, non-compliant workforce chairpersons' sentiments toward internal factors such as their level of administrative support were encouraging but not always as positive.

**Perceptions of College Administrative Support**

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 8 somewhat pessimistically offers this rationale for his/her programs' non-compliance:

> I can only see it from this perspective. I know [one-day] I'll get my program back into compliance because we're really shifting things around. Part of our _____ program's problem is we have a whole lot of people who want to learn… but what is happening was the program used to be held over at Central. And if they weren't getting fifteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty people in the classes, they [college administration] were canceling the classes. Well, one of the things that does is kill out all of the classes that you are going to have your graduates coming out of. Therefore, because they do not want those classes or there is not high enough numbers - they kill them [which translates to THECB non-compliancy for graduates].

Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 5 offered a slightly different but useful example of a lack of support from administration. "Since effectiveness is measured by job placement, it would be nice to have a professional full-time job placement position—somewhere, some place to help us with tracking."

After the recording had ended and the session was over, several non-compliant workforce chairpersons stayed and continued the effectiveness discussion. What they revealed spoke volumes to the researcher and shed new light on non-compliance. In fact, it could be correlated with the previous comments from Non-Compliant Workforce Chair 5.

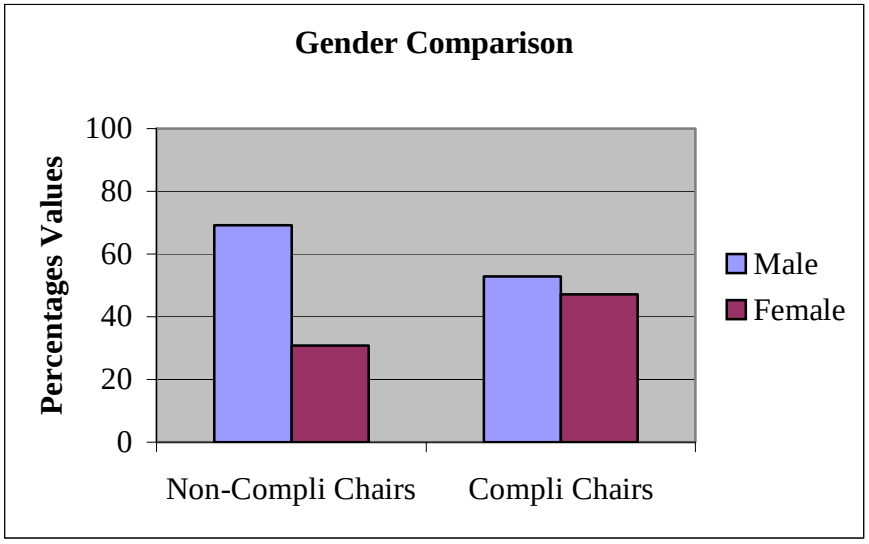
For at least some of the non-compliant programs at HCCS, the problem has not been one of student recruitment/retention. The problem has been one of student characteristics. Apparently, some programs have students who are more likely to be nomadic, self-employed, or seek employment outside of the United States. As an illustration, graduates of auto mechanics and cosmetology tend to be difficult to track for THECB purposes because these occupations (1) have great mobility and (2) are often part of small, individually-owned business.

## SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

### Comparison of Aggregate [Group] Findings

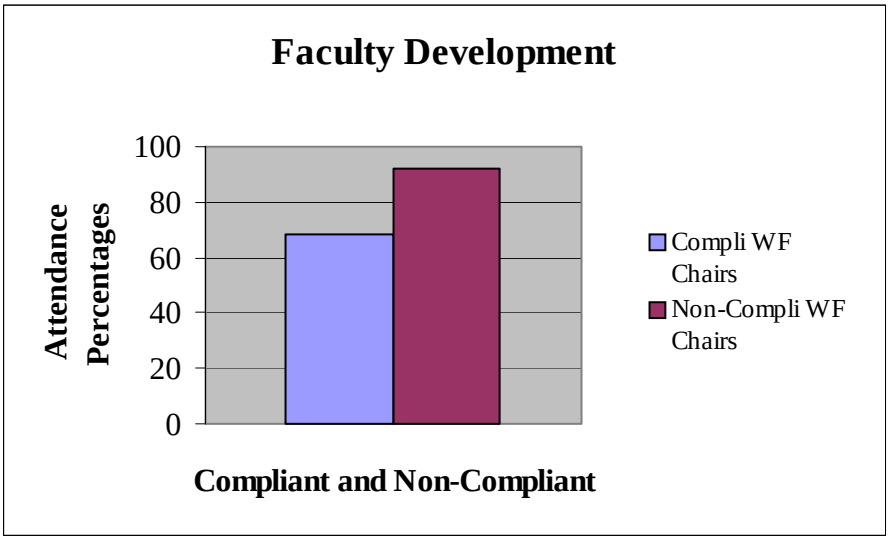
Findings from the compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons revealed that both groups shared similarities and dissimilarities. However, when taken as a whole, there appeared to be few differences between the two groups. One of the most obvious differences between the compliant and non-compliant chairperson groups were gender. Figure 5 represents a cross comparison of the percentage of males and females for each group. This table indicates that the compliant chairpersons were comprised of a higher percentage of females (47.06%) than the non-compliant chairpersons, which were comprised of only (30.77%) females.

Figure 5



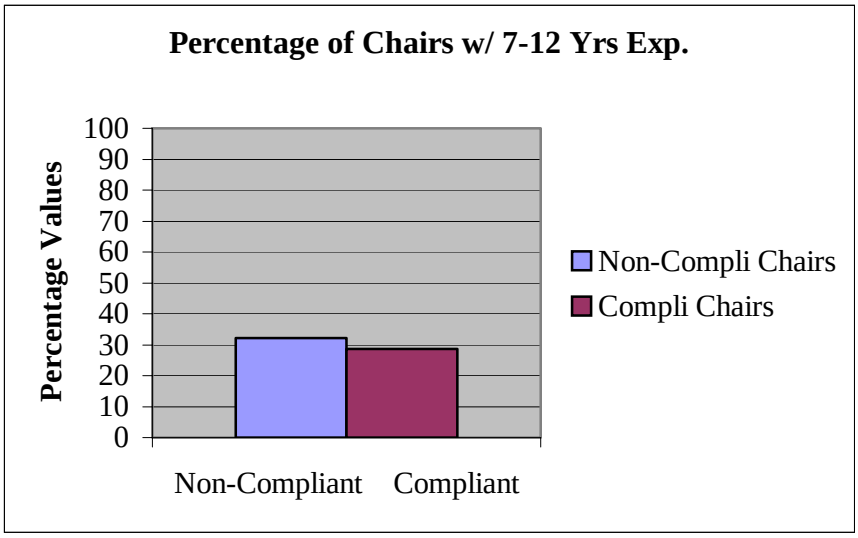
Another stark difference between the compliant and non-compliant workforce groups was their involvement and commitment to full-time faculty development. By way of cross percentage comparisons, Figure 6 represents the disparity between compliant and non-compliant faculty involvement in professional development activities. Ironically, Figure 6 revealed that non-compliant chairpersons were more likely to encourage their full-time faculty to participate in developmental activities; yet, non-compliant chairpersons still had lower THECB performance outcomes. Conversely, 68.42% of compliant program chairpersons reported that their workforce faculty participated in developmental activities, compared to 92.31% of the non-compliant chairpersons' faculty. This is a mean of 80.37% with a standard deviation of 16.89%.

Figure 6



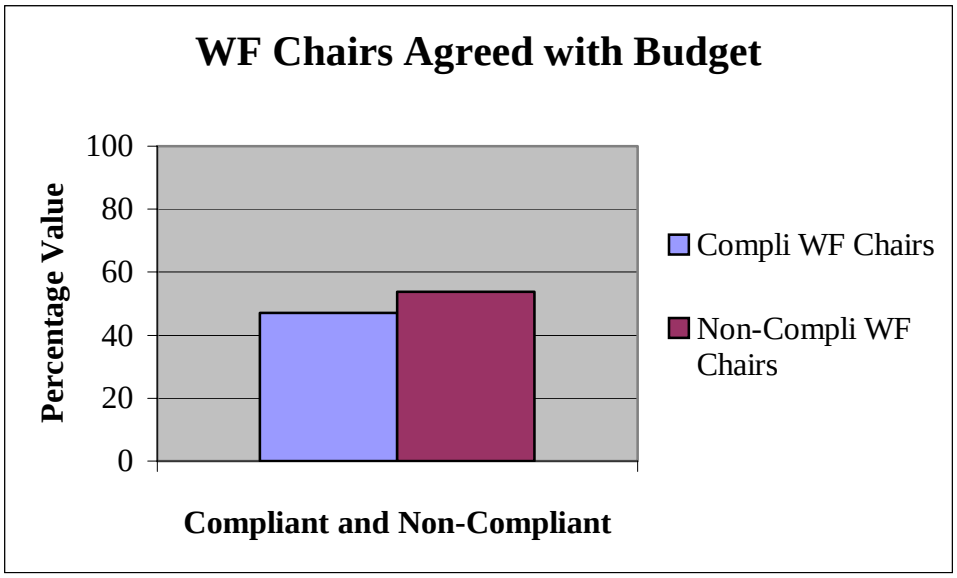
Until now, the researcher has primarily discussed differences between the aggregate groups [compliant and non-compliant]; however, attention shifts to encompass some of their major similarities. A similarity discussed during both focus sessions as well as revealed in the questionnaires was the need to have workforce chairperson longevity. Workforce chairpersons [both compliant and non-compliant] generally agreed that it took a minimum of six years for chairpersons to become effective at their varied roles. Using seven to 12 years as the pivotal point, the researcher sought to determine which group possessed the highest percentage of chairpersons in this range. The results were very similar. These results indicated no significant differences in leader experience between both groups. The mean was 30.36% with a standard deviation of only 2.52%.

Figure 7



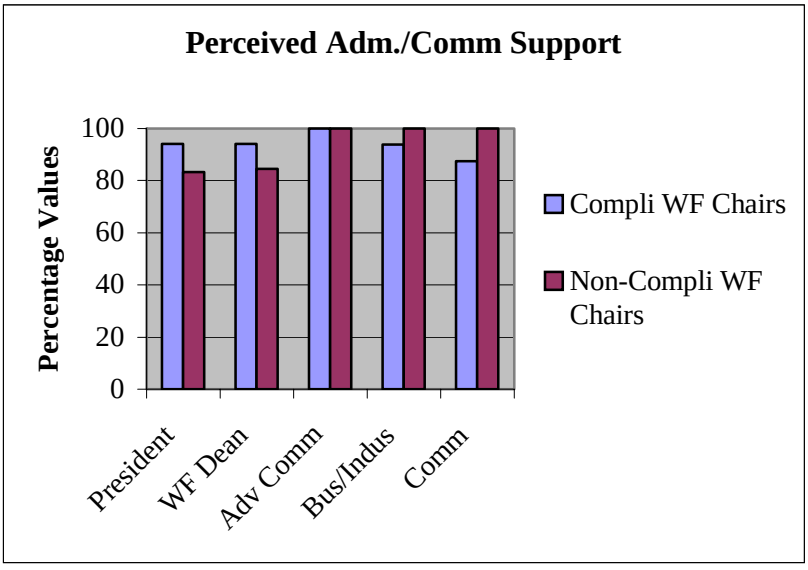
Despite much criticism regarding workforce program budgets by compliant and non-compliant chairpersons during Focus Group One and Two, Figure 8 indicates that both workforce groups generally agreed with their programs' budgets. This does not suggest, however, that the compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons' claims for increased funding for advertising/marketing, instructors' salaries, or facilities were unfounded. Since the budget approval results as represented in Figure 8 are very similar, this could further suggest that both groups of workforce chairpersons grapple with the same financial concerns. Particularly since, 47.06% compliant and 53.85% non-compliant workforce chairpersons agreed that their budgets were adequate. The mean was 50.46% with a standard deviation of only 4.80%.

Figure 8



Below are more similarities between compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons. Figure 9 indicates no broad differences between the perceptions of compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons' perceived level of support from various internal and external constituencies. When questioned, 100% of both sets of chairpersons believed their advisory committees were supportive. Non-compliant chairpersons were more prone to believe that their community and business leaders were more supportive than did the compliant chairpersons (87.50% and 93.75% respectively). Percentage totals were slightly lower regarding the compliant (94.12%; 94.11%) and non-compliant (84.61%; 83.33%) chairpersons' perception of administrative support received from the dean and college president.

Figure 9



# CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into three sections: summary of the study, conclusions reached from the findings, and the researcher's recommendations for those constituencies that ultimately have a large stake in the effectiveness of the workforce operation at HCCS (i.e., the college presidents, the system's workforce office, the workforce deans, and workforce program chairpersons).

### SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

At its inception in 1901, the two-year college and postsecondary vocational education movement was unpopular with many scholars, parents, and students because vocational programming lacked academic rigor and limited social mobility (Gordon, 2003). Pollard, Purvis, and Walford (1988) later noted that post-secondary vocational education would progress from its relative isolation of the early 1900s to almost absolute integration in the late 1980s, increasing in status, popularity, and effectiveness. Vocational curriculum expanded into a plethora of high-tech programs such as nursing, nuclear

medicine, banking, finance, homeland security, NANO technology, gaming technology, and homeland security (Vanwagoner & Bradman, 2003).

Dare (2001) and others marked this transformation as "the New Vocationalism." Despite the fact that most students of the New Vocationalism have enjoyed greater social mobility through higher wages as well as increased academic transferability for their coursework, this has not been the case for all vocational students who have attended workforce programs at Texas community colleges. To ensure students successfully complete their training and are able to find meaningful employment, state agencies such as THECB monitors the adequacy of postsecondary workforce effectiveness (THECB, 2004).

According to the THECB 2003 Annual Data Profile of successful student outcomes (placement and graduates), 32.86% of all for-credit HCCS workforce programs did not comply with one or both of THECB's performance criteria. Given the large percentage of non-compliant workforce programs at HCCS, the question could be asked, "Was this brought about by the by the colleges' administrative policies/practices, the system's workforce development office, the workforce deans, the workforce program chairpersons, non-responsive faculty, a lack of student interest, difficult economic times, a lack of community and business support, or variations of all these factors?"

Stevenson (2003) stated poor workforce program performance could be attributed to any number of institutional factors. This study explored similar/dissimilar factors (e.g., program leadership, faculty development, enrollment management, advisory committee involvement, program budgeting, marketing, etc) of workforce program effectiveness between two groups: compliant and non-compliant workforce program chairpersons. Seeking to grasp a broad but rich understanding of these groups [the compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons], the researcher employed quantitative [questionnaires] and qualitative [focus groups] research approaches.

The researcher attempted to investigate all 43 HCCS workforce chairpersons. First, the workforce chairpersons were divided into two groups: those who supervised compliant workforce programs and those who supervised non-compliant programs. The researcher emailed (identical) Internet-based instruments to both groups with the aim of performing a comparative analysis on the resulting data.

Group One [compliant] consisted of 30 chairpersons and Group Two [non-compliant] consisted of 13 chairpersons. Subsequently, 32 of the 43 HCCS chairpersons responded to the Internet-based questionnaire. In Group One, 19 of the 30 compliant workforce program chairpersons electronically returned their surveys for a response rate of 67%. In Group Two, 13 of the 13 non-compliant

workforce program chairpersons electronically returned their surveys for a response rate of 100%.

In addition to the internet-based questionnaires both groups received, the researcher also conducted two HCCS workforce chairperson focus groups. Group One consisted of compliant workforce chairpersons and Group Two consisted of non-compliant workforce chairpersons. The researcher invited a total of 20 workforce program chairpersons to attend: 10 compliant and 10 non-compliant. Group One was comprised of 10 compliant chairpersons for an attendance rating of 100% and Group Two was comprised of nine non-compliant chairpersons for a 90% rating.

In addition to performing a comparative analysis of quantitative questionnaire data, the researcher also performed a comparative analysis on the focus group transcripts for both groups. This comparative analysis of Focus Group One and Focus Group Two data yielded some remarkable findings. The conclusions will be discussed in the proceeding section.

## CONCLUSIONS

The quantitative and qualitative findings presented in Chapter Four formed the basis for the conclusions listed below:

1. In terms of demographic characteristics of HCCS workforce program chairpersons, with the exception of gender, Group One [the compliant] and Group Two [the non-compliant] results were essentially identical. Group One had a higher concentration of females (47.06%) than Group Two (30.77%). Nevertheless, other demographic similarities between both groups were age and educational level. The majority of workforce program chairperson [compliant and non-compliant] ranged in age from 45 to 59 years old. Likewise, these two groups shared similarities in educational backgrounds. However, Group Two [non-compliant] appeared to have a slight educational advantage, with 38.46% of its chairpersons having earned doctoral degrees compared to 15.79% in Group Two. Conversely, at the master's level, Group One [compliant] posted a higher percentage (52.60%) of chairpersons with having attained a master's degree compared to the 46.15% of the non-compliant chairpersons in Group Two.
2. Regarding the workforce chairperson's industrial experience, years of supervising workforce programs, and tenure as a HCCS workforce chairperson, the results were slightly mixed. The majority (58.81) of compliant workforce chairpersons had 3-10 years of industrial experience, which was less than the majority (69.67%) of

non-compliant chairpersons who reported 11–20 years of industrial experience. Oddly, in terms of tenure as a HCCS chairperson, both groups appeared less experienced – nearly the majority of both groups had less than six years of chair experience. For example, 59.90% of non-compliant chairpersons had six years or less of actual tenure as a HCCS chairperson, while, 50.00% of compliant chairpersons had six years or less of actual tenure as a HCCS chairperson.

3. With respect to supervisors' load (e.g., number of faculty, adjuncts, and staff supervised), the findings between them were slightly mixed. On average, the compliant workforce chairpersons supervised fewer faculty than did the non-compliant workforce chairpersons. Compliant workforce chairpersons typically supervised 1-2 faculty members, while the non-compliant workforce chairpersons supervised 3-10 faculty members. The majority (60.00%) of compliant workforce chairpersons supervised 4-13 adjunct faculty members, while the non-compliant workforce chairpersons' supervision numbers appeared more equally divided. For example, 16.67% workforce chairpersons supervised either between 4-8, 9-13, or 14-18 adjunct faculty members respectively.

4. Regarding professional development patterns, advertising/marketing, and enrollment tends, Group One [compliant] and Group Two [non-compliant] again appeared more similar than dissimilar. The greatest difference between both groups was in their approach toward professional development. Non-compliant chairpersons were one-third more likely to require their faculty to attend professional development activities than were compliant chairpersons. In evaluating questionnaire results, both compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons employed similar advertising/marketing strategies. However, non-compliant workforce chairpersons tended to favor using brochures or the word-of-mouth advertising methods best. During Focus Group One and Two, both compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons voiced discontent with the lack of a HCCS wide workforce marketing strategy.

5. Results from the survey questionnaires revealed that slightly over half of both compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons generally agreed that their budgets were adequate. However, during each focus group, both compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons recommended that budget amounts should be increased to

hire additional system-level professional to assist with marketing as well as hire additional full-time faculty members.

6. Despite overwhelming comments during both focus groups concerning the need for corporate involvement, surprisingly, 25% of the compliant chairpersons surveyed indicated that they had no business/industrial affiliations. This [percentage] finding takes on even greater significance when compared to the 100% of non-compliant chairpersons who indicated having business/industrial affiliations.

7. The non-compliant chairpersons impressed the researcher again with their commitment toward meeting with their advisory committees. Impressively, 46.15% of the non-compliant chairpersons met with their respective advisory committees at least 3-4 times per year. While, none of the compliant chairpersons reported meeting with their advisory committee four times per year. However, 23.53% of compliant chairpersons did report they met with their advisory committee three times per year.

8. As a final example of the similarities between Group One [compliant chairpersons] and Group Two [non-compliant chairpersons], both groups were very positive about their respective college president,

workforce dean, advisory committee, industrial leaders, and surrounding service area. Both focus groups revealed that most of the compliant and non-compliant chairpersons thought his/her president or dean was supportive of their workforce program. As it related to their perceptions of the community supporting their program, the two groups slightly differed in their opinions. For example, 100% of the non-compliant chairpersons viewed their service area as supportive, while only 87.50% of compliant chairpersons viewed their service area as supportive.

## IMPLICATIONS

Beginning this project, the researcher admittedly had some "researcher bias." The prevailing assumption was that if a workforce program was non-compliant, then this was an indictment of the chairperson. However, after reviewing the findings, this assumption may not be accurate. Particularly when one considers the THECB Annual Data Profile (2003) ranked 32.86% of HCCS' workforce programs as non-compliant. Moreover, 55% of all the workforce programs located at the Central College were deemed as non-compliant. Also, one Central College non-compliant chairperson was allowed to supervise five programs and they were all non-compliant. As not to single out Central College, it is important to note that every college within HCCS' five-campus system had

non-compliant workforce programs. In addition, there were programs [system-wide] that were ranked as compliant, but were "marginally" compliant because of their mediocre percentage for graduates and placement.

Given the magnitude of the workforce non-compliance issue at HCCS, and the fact that this problem stretches to all campuses, one should not rationalize this to be "solely" an issue of "deadwood" at the chairperson's position. When one considers that many of the findings from Group One [compliant] and Group Two [non-compliant] were essentially identical (or in some cases the non-compliant chairpersons' percentages actually outperformed their compliant counterparts), it would be "reasonable" to conclude that workforce program non-compliance may not be a malady of the workforce chair. Rather, this compliance conundrum may be linked to restrictive institutionalized policy and practice. The findings could be correlated to and find further credence in Carole Keeton Strayhorn's 2003 Texas Performance School Review of HCCS, where the Comptroller concluded that,

> Additionally, there is no evidence that HCCS holds administrators accountable. In the most effective systems, administrators understand the organizational structure and know that they will be held accountable for the decisions they make and the actions they take within their areas of authority and responsibility.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strayhorn (2003) offered this rationale to recommend that HCCS' reporting structure be changed, "The organizational structure and lines of authority are difficult for college instructional administrators to follow, especially when goals set at the system office conflict with goals set at the colleges." The researcher recommends that HCCS should consider having all workforce deans report [directly] to the Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) of Workforce Development. In turn, this realignment could add congruency and improve program compliance. The AVC should continue to report to the vice chancellor for educational development. By having all five deans report to the AVC rather than the five college presidents (where each dean is presently housed), could improve workforce alignment, accountability, and help to curtail competition among workforce program chairpersons. Despite many political ramifications, this realignment strategy is useful, and its impact could be felt immediately from the system's office to every program throughout the district.

2. The dynamics of operating a workforce educational program makes the HCCS chair selection policy seem very restrictive. Consider the

cornerstone of workforce program effectiveness is the ability of a program chairperson to develop long-term relationships with business and industry. Often, to seek out, cultivate, and benefit from these types of meaningful relationships, a new chairperson must remain in the position longer than his/her three-year term as chair. Given this, the HCCS chair selection policy should be modified. In its current state, the HCCS chair selection process could be considered limiting because there are no inherent mechanisms to prompt a chairperson to be effective. For example, if an individual is hired from the outside with the expressed purpose of being a workforce program chair, he/she knows that this is their only option. Wherefore, HCCS faculty members that are elected as workforce chairs are well aware that they have the option of returning to their previous faculty position if they are not successful at the chairperson's position.

3. Because their missions are very similar, HCCS' continuing education and corporate training offices should be merged with the office of workforce development to function as a single entity with a single mission. This strategy would offer the corporate sector not only a greater volume of training opportunities to select from but much faster delivery times of the desired courses. Further, the strategy

would provide senior workforce administrators another option to salvage non-compliant programs by converting them to corporate or continuing education units. As revealed in the focus group session, some non-compliant programs are productive but have difficulty "tracking" their job placements. Classifying these programs as continuing educational programs would alleviate this problem and could increase student enrollment because of easier admission requirements and entry schedules (not based on semesters) that is more flexible.

4. Literature suggests that program location can be a pivotal part of occupation program success. It is recommended that *a process of program review* [of all the institutional and community-based stakeholders] be conducted to evaluate the feasibility of relocating only Central College's industrial skills, crafts, and trade programs from their urban setting near downtown - closer to the petro-chemical and ship channel area. The researcher believes that these 'heavy' industrial-based workforce programs' compliance rating could increase if they were moved closer to the industrialized section of Harris county, which is located closer to Southeast/Northeast College.

Since both colleges are in existence, this move can be accomplished at a minimum cost.

5. HCCS should encourage transformational leadership among workforce program chairpersons. In that, an environment should be created whereby workforce chairpersons can become more entrepreneurial. One method of encouraging this entrepreneurial spirit is simply to establish a discretionary line item in workforce program budgets that would encourage workforce chairpersons to raise program contributions from their advisory committees and other business leaders that can be used for departmental scholarships to assist in student recruitment, program marketing, or to develop/support student clubs/organizations.

6. Despite its compliance issues, HCCS is still the best workforce and corporate training choice in three counties (e.g., parts of Harris, Ft. Bend, and Waller). Unfortunately, HCCS remains one of the best-kept secrets. For-profits have demonstrated the benefits of using aggressive marketing strategies (e.g., greater connectiveness to the community and greater involvement from business and industry which can bring an influx of new students). If community colleges are to remain

competitive, HCCS and other public two-year colleges must lend more energy towards advertising/marketing.

7. Workforce deans should move quicker to close programs that are habitually out of compliance or look more at using Marketable Skills Certificates (MSC) in non-compliant programs. MSC have two benefits. First, MSC offer students' faster completion times to receive a credential. Second, once a student receives a MSC, this affords the workforce program an opportunity to count that student as a completer. Thus, improving program completer percentages.

8. Since some workforce program chairs expressed contention towards the ability, motivation, and commitment of part-time [adjunct] faculty, instructional training and faculty development opportunities could be created or expanded to help increase adjuncts' instructional awareness and expertise.

9. Regardless of the size of the workforce program, chairpersons that supervise multiple workforce programs should not be allowed to do so if one or more of the workforce programs are non-compliant.

10. All workforce programs [compliant and non-compliant] should strengthen workforce relationships with public area high schools;

employ more dual credit with these schools; and establish a stronger workforce presence and a direct feed from the HCCS' alternative high school.

## NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since this study used the THECB 2003 Annual Data Report, the researcher believe that it is in the best interest of the institution to replicate this study using more recent THECB data - in an attempt to gauge the level of workforce program improvement that has occurred. Also, when/if this study is replicated, it should include the perspectives of the workforce students, workforce deans, and the college presidents. Further, since the compliant and non-compliant workforce chairpersons will self-report program performance outcomes, this information could be cross-referenced and validated against existing institutional data.

# APPENDIX A

## THE INSTRUMENT COVER LETTER

Dear Workforce Chairperson:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin, in the Community College leadership Program. I need your help with a study [2004-12-0029] that attempts to identify factors that influence workforce effectiveness. Please complete the attached questionnaire; it will take approximately 30 minutes. My aim is to have 43 Houston Community College (HCC) workforce (WF) program chairs participate. This study is extremely important because, *as a former workforce student and program chair*, I personally know that effective WF programs increase educational and earning opportunities for students. Additionally, this study takes on added significance because of the growing need from Houston businesses vying for well-trained employees.

The content of this questionnaire includes: chairperson demographics, administrative matters, and program information (i.e., marketing, community and industrial support, budget, student characteristics, ect.). This questionnaire has been assigned codes to ensure confidentiality and facilitate the sorting of the data. Upon returning questionnaire, do not include your name or your program's name. Please return the questionnaire via email to Lonnie.Howard@hccs.edu. Should you decide not to participate, this will not affect your current or future relationships with HCC. There is no need to sign this cover letter, by responding to the questionnaire indicates a willingness to participate in the study. Should you have any questions or would like to obtain additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (713) 718-2504.

Sincerely,

Lonnie L. Howard, A.A.S, A.G.S., B.S., M.S.
Doctoral Student, The University of Texas at Austin
The Community College Leadership Program

Research Proposal # 2004-12-0029

# APPENDIX B

## THE INSTRUMENT

**Workforce Program Effectiveness Profile (WFPEP)**
**Questionnaire**

Directions: Please complete and return this questionnaire electronically. Do not include your name or your program's name.

1. What is your gender?
   - O Male
   - O Female

2. What is your age?
   - O 20-30
   - O 31-40
   - O 41-50
   - O 51-60
   - O 61-70
   - O 71 and older

3. What is your highest level of education?
   - O Associate's Degree
   - O Bachelor's Degree
   - O Master's Degree
   - O Doctoral Degree
   - O Professional Degree (i.e. MD, JD)
   - O Other (please specify): _____

4. What was your major in your highest degree?
   - O Agriculture
   - O Arts & Humanities
   - O Education
   - O Engineering
   - O Science and Technology
   - O Other (please specify): _____

5. How many years of industrial experience do you have?
   - O Less than a year
   - O 1 - 5 years
   - O 6 - 10 years
   - O 11 - 20 years
   - O 21 - 25 years
   - O 26 - 30 years

6. How many year(s) have you supervised Community college workforce programs?
   - O Less than a year
   - O 1 - 5 years
   - O 6 - 10 years
   - O 11 - 20 years
   - O 21 - 25 years
   - O 26 - 30 years

7. How long have you been a HCC chairperson?
   - O Less than a year
   - O 1 - 5 years
   - O 6 - 10 years
   - O 11 - 15 years
   - O More

8. Professionally, what associations or groups do you have an affiliation (choose all that apply)?
   - O Chambers of Commerce
   - O Workforce or Industrial Related Associations/Groups
   - O Other (please specify): _____.

9. What types of professional development activities do you attend to keep current on the latest workforce trends? Please specify: _____.

10. How many full-time staff (non-faculty) do you supervise?
   - O None
   - O 1 – 3 individuals
   - O 4 – 7 individuals

11. How many full-time faculty are you supervising this spring semester (choose one)?
   - O None
   - O 1 - 4
   - O 5 - 8
   - O 9 - 15

12. How many adjunct faculty are you supervising this spring semester (choose one)?
   - O None
   - O 1 - 4
   - O 5 - 8
   - O 9 - 15

13. Are faculty provided with instructional or classroom management training?
   - O Yes
   - O No

13a. If "YES" how often is training provided to faculty in a typical calendar year?

- O Annually
- O Quarterly
- O Monthly
- O Semi-Annually
- O Other (please specify) _____

13b. Are faculty members required to attend professional development activities?
   - O Yes
   - O No

13c. Are faculty compensated for attending professional development activities?

O Yes
O No

14. What types of advertising is done to market your workforce programs? (Choose all that apply)

O Area Newspapers
O Radio
O Direct Mail
O Participation in Community Activities
O Other (please specify) _____

15. Of the following types of advertising listed, which have produced an increase in student enrollment (choose two only)?

a. _____
b. _____

16. What are you most likely to use to plan courses (select top - 3)?

__ Program Chairperson's Decision
__ Faculty Input Only
__ Both Student and Faculty Input/Feedback Only
__ Feedback from Advisory Committee
__ Based on Institutional Enrollment Data
__ Based on employment Trends/Jobs Market
__ Other (please specify): _____

17. Has your program ever applied for and received a state, federal, and/or private grant?

O Yes
O No

18. If "YES" what percentage of your current program budget is attributable to such grants?

O Less than 10%
O 10%-20%
O 21%-30%
O 31%-40%
O 41%-50%
O 51% or greater

19. Do you believe your program's budget is adequate?

20. Approximately, what percentage of students return to enroll in additional courses?

O About 25 %
O About 50%
O About 75%
O About 100%
O Less than 25%

21. What is the typical age of the students enrolled in your program?

O 18 -29
O 30 - 40
O 41 - 50
O 51 - 60
O Over

22. What is the typical educational background of students who enter your program?

O No GED or High School Diploma
O GED or High School Diploma
O Some College Hours
O College Degree
O Other

23. Name two reasons why most students enroll in your program?

O Upgrade Job Skills
O Change Careers
O Career Advancement Opportunities
O Learn a Job Skill(s) to Gain Employment
O Other (please specify): _____.

24. What level of growth do you forecast for your program in the next 5 years?

O Rapid Program Growth
O Moderate Program Growth
O No Program Growth
O Program will Decline

25. List three barriers that have impeded your program's effectiveness.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

26. List three factors that have improved your program's effectiveness?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

27. Overall, what level of support does your workforce program receive from the following:

The President (choose level of support):

O Supportive
O Somewhat Supportive
O Unsupportive

The Workforce Dean (choose level of support):

- O Supportive
- O Somewhat Supportive
- O Unsupportive

Your Advisory Committee (choose level of support)

- O Supportive
- O Somewhat Supportive
- O Unsupportive

Area Business & Industry Leaders/Employers (choose level of support)

- O Supportive
- O Somewhat Supportive
- O Unsupportive

The Community in General (choose level of support)

- O Supportive
- O Somewhat Supportive
- O Unsupportive

## APPENDIX C

### THE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

***Group One and Group Two***

Study #: 2004-12-0029

Focus Group Discussion Questions

(Improving Workforce Program Effectiveness)

1. When you think of program compliance [effectiveness], what comes to mind?

2. How are these factors related to your program's effectiveness rating?

3. What are the top three factors that *positively influence* workforce program effectiveness?

4. What are the top three factors that *stifl*e workforce program effectiveness?

5. What would be your recommendations to improve workforce program effectiveness?

This focus group discussion **will not be audio or video recorded** to maintain confidentiality

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# VITA

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Lonnie received an associate of applied science degree from San Jacinto College in May 1993, an associate of general studies degree from Houston Community College System in December 1995, a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Houston in May 2001, a master's degree from the University of Houston in May 2002. In May 2003, he entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas.

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